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ZELUCA;

OR,

Educated and Uneducated Woman.

955.

753

4. 11

1960-1961, 1962-1963, 1964-1965, 1966-1967, 1968-1969, 1970-1971, 1972-1973, 1974-1975, 1976-1977, 1978-1979, 1980-1981, 1982-1983, 1984-1985, 1986-1987, 1988-1989, 1990-1991, 1992-1993, 1994-1995, 1996-1997, 1998-1999, 2000-2001, 2002-2003, 2004-2005, 2006-2007, 2008-2009, 2010-2011, 2012-2013, 2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019, 2020-2021, 2022-2023, 2024-2025, 2026-2027, 2028-2029, 2030-2031, 2032-2033, 2034-2035, 2036-2037, 2038-2039, 2040-2041, 2042-2043, 2044-2045, 2046-2047, 2048-2049, 2050-2051, 2052-2053, 2054-2055, 2056-2057, 2058-2059, 2060-2061, 2062-2063, 2064-2065, 2066-2067, 2068-2069, 2070-2071, 2072-2073, 2074-2075, 2076-2077, 2078-2079, 2080-2081, 2082-2083, 2084-2085, 2086-2087, 2088-2089, 2090-2091, 2092-2093, 2094-2095, 2096-2097, 2098-2099, 2100-2101, 2102-2103, 2104-2105, 2106-2107, 2108-2109, 2110-2111, 2112-2113, 2114-2115, 2116-2117, 2118-2119, 2120-2121, 2122-2123, 2124-2125, 2126-2127, 2128-2129, 2130-2131, 2132-2133, 2134-2135, 2136-2137, 2138-2139, 2140-2141, 2142-2143, 2144-2145, 2146-2147, 2148-2149, 2150-2151, 2152-2153, 2154-2155, 2156-2157, 2158-2159, 2160-2161, 2162-2163, 2164-2165, 2166-2167, 2168-2169, 2170-2171, 2172-2173, 2174-2175, 2176-2177, 2178-2179, 2180-2181, 2182-2183, 2184-2185, 2186-2187, 2188-2189, 2190-2191, 2192-2193, 2194-2195, 2196-2197, 2198-2199, 2200-2201, 2202-2203, 2204-2205, 2206-2207, 2208-2209, 2210-2211, 2212-2213, 2214-2215, 2216-2217, 2218-2219, 2220-2221, 2222-2223, 2224-2225, 2226-2227, 2228-2229, 2230-2231, 2232-2233, 2234-2235, 2236-2237, 2238-2239, 2240-2241, 2242-2243, 2244-2245, 2246-2247, 2248-2249, 2250-2251, 2252-2253, 2254-2255, 2256-2257, 2258-2259, 2260-2261, 2262-2263, 2264-2265, 2266-2267, 2268-2269, 2270-2271, 2272-2273, 2274-2275, 2276-2277, 2278-2279, 2280-2281, 2282-2283, 2284-2285, 2286-2287, 2288-2289, 2290-2291, 2292-2293, 2294-2295, 2296-2297, 2298-2299, 2300-2301, 2302-2303, 2304-2305, 2306-2307, 2308-2309, 2310-2311, 2312-2313, 2314-2315, 2316-2317, 2318-2319, 2320-2321, 2322-2323, 2324-2325, 2326-2327, 2328-2329, 2330-2331, 2332-2333, 2334-2335, 2336-2337, 2338-2339, 2340-2341, 2342-2343, 2344-2345, 2346-2347, 2348-2349, 2350-2351, 2352-2353, 2354-2355, 2356-2357, 2358-2359, 2360-2361, 2362-2363, 2364-2365, 2366-2367, 2368-2369, 2370-2371, 2372-2373, 2374-2375, 2376-2377, 2378-2379, 2380-2381, 2382-2383, 2384-2385, 2386-2387, 2388-2389, 2390-2391, 2392-2393, 2394-2395, 2396-2397, 2398-2399, 2400-2401, 2402-2403, 2404-2405, 2406-2407, 2408-2409, 2410-2411, 2412-2413, 2414-2415, 2416-2417, 2418-2419, 2420-2421, 2422-2423, 2424-2425, 2426-2427, 2428-2429, 2430-2431, 2432-2433, 2434-2435, 2436-2437, 2438-2439, 2440-2441, 2442-2443, 2444-2445, 2446-2447, 2448-2449, 2450-2451, 2452-2453, 2454-2455, 2456-2457, 2458-2459, 2460-2461, 2462-2463, 2464-2465, 2466-2467, 2468-2469, 2470-2471, 2472-2473, 2474-2475, 2476-2477, 2478-2479, 2480-2481, 2482-2483, 2484-2485, 2486-2487, 2488-2489, 2490-2491, 2492-2493, 2494-2495, 2496-2497, 2498-2499, 2500-2501, 2502-2503, 2504-2505, 2506-2507, 2508-2509, 2510-2511, 2512-2513, 2514-2515, 2516-2517, 2518-2519, 2520-2521, 2522-2523, 2524-2525, 2526-2527, 2528-2529, 2530-2531, 2532-2533, 2534-2535, 2536-2537, 2538-2539, 2540-2541, 2542-2543, 2544-2545, 2546-2547, 2548-2549, 2550-2551, 2552-2553, 2554-2555, 2556-2557, 2558-2559, 2560-2561, 2562-2563, 2564-2565, 2566-2567, 2568-2569, 2570-2571, 2572-2573, 2574-2575, 2576-2577, 2578-2579, 2580-2581, 2582-2583, 2584-2585, 2586-2587, 2588-2589, 2590-2591, 2592-2593, 2594-2595, 2596-2597, 2598-2599, 2600-2601, 2602-2603, 2604-2605, 2606-2607, 2608-2609, 2610-2611, 2612-2613, 2614-2615, 2616-2617, 2618-2619, 2620-2621, 2622-2623, 2624-2625, 2626-2627, 2628-2629, 2630-2631, 2632-2633, 2634-2635, 2636-2637, 2638-2639, 2640-2641, 2642-2643, 2644-2645, 2646-2647, 2648-2649, 2650-2651, 2652-2653, 2654-2655, 2656-2657, 2658-2659, 2660-2661, 2662-2663, 2664-2665, 2666-2667, 2668-2669, 2670-2671, 2672-2673, 2674-2675, 2676-2677, 2678-2679, 2680-2681, 2682-2683, 2684-2685, 2686-2687, 2688-2689, 2690-2691, 2692-2693, 2694-2695, 2696-2697, 2698-2699, 2700-2701, 2702-2703, 27

Richard Harwood

ZELUCA;

OR,

Educated and Uneducated Woman.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

“Religion teaches that Vice leads to endless Misery in a future state, and Experience proves, that in spite of the gayest and most prosperous appearances, inward Misery accompanies her; for even in this Life, her ways are ways of wretchedness, and all her paths are woe. This observation has been so often made that it must be known to all, and its truth is seldom formally denied by any; yet the conduct of men would sometimes lead us to suspect either that they had never heard it, or that they think it false. To recal a truth of such importance to the recollection of Mankind, and to illustrate it by example, may therefore be of use.”

DR. MOORE.

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TO
ALL

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ZELUCA ;

OR,

Educated and Uneducated Woman.

CHAP. I.

“ This Life has no value, unless it is subservient to the Religious Education of our hearts; unless it prepares us for a higher destiny by our free choice of Virtue upon Earth.”

MAD. DE. STAEL.

IT was with her mother alone that ZelUCA aimed at no sort of restraint to the petulance, the acrimony, and the envy that always ensued from retrospecting those pleasures that had failed in pro-

VOL. II.

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mised enjoyment. When adulation and conquest animated her ambition and her hopes, she was aversely communicative, or repellingly reserved to Mrs. Delvayne's anxious expecting curiosity ; but, when mortification and defeat had raised her jealousy, and stung her self-love, she was so fluent and vehement. that her mother could not but feel herself the culprit, indirectly charged with all the *mal-aventures*, it seemed to be considered in the duties of her post to have overcome or averted. Consequently, Zeluca's reserve, however cruel, to affection that centered every hope and pleasure in her, was preferable to the ready communication experience had proved to be the overflowing of gall. When success ensued from any suggested system or experiment, Mrs. Delvayne knew Zeluca would virtually refuse her all approbation and gratitude, by taking to herself the merit of it ; but on miscarriage or defeat, she prepared herself to sustain all the blame. And as

her own incertitude, with regard to Wolsey's intentions, was too harassing not to lead her to judge of the effect on her daughter's overbearing spirit, she was prepared for the vexation Zeluca gave utterance to the morning after the ball, with all the explanatory *ifs* that enabled her self-love to devolve the defeat of personal triumph on her mother's miscalculating politics. *If* she had been allowed to follow the bent of disposition to *open* enmity instead of adopting *sly* disguise, she knew Wolsey would have admitted she had fair right to be piqued with Lady Naglesfort; and *then* he would have made a point of dining at Spire: and *then* the flirtation with Lord Edward that had disgusted him would *not* have taken place, as she should not have *thought* of it, *if* her mother had not planned it. She wished she had come home when she declared herself ill: *if* her mother had not warned her, she should, and *then*, *if* she *had* been suspected of mortification, she should

not have had the discredit of feigning illness to manœuvre for Wolsey's remission of her sentence to sit still. But, as she had stayed, it should have been to the last—there were probably reels, and the best part of the evening then ; but her mother chose to be kept in order by Lady Naglefort's sneers at her sudden recovery, so Wolsey could not make a declaration. She was always dragged away at the favourable times, and he left to be snapped up by somebody that was lying in wait for him. And *if* they had come away early, Marianne would have returned with them, and then that detestable idiot, Valcrest, would not have been able so to annoy her, that she scarcely could command attention to engross Wolsey. And she wound up a list of regrets, and repinings, repeated and re-repeated, with a threat, that *if* she did attain to the power, she would *make Wolsey understand* she was not such a dolt as not to feel what was due to the suspense and torture he

had put her to, though she chose to go through it *for his sake*. Mrs. Delvayne was far from attempting to reason her into more candour, or from irritating her with anticipated disappointment: if that power of reprisal on Wolsey should never arrive, it was evident Zeluca looked to as eventually certain. But she was aware that it was essential alike for her own and her daughter's peace, to have an *object ready* for her to make a transition to, through whom her pride might, in a degree, be saved the shock it was sufficiently cruel her love should endure if Wolsey should secede. She had been sometime training the open, unsuspicious credulity of Sir John Dawlish, to understand, that a widower of eight-and-thirty, with four children, might be selected, in spite of all competitors, by a girl of seventeen, like Zeluca; and while she soothingly represented to Zeluca, that she gave too much importance to the little mortifications all other girls were in the

constant habit of enduring; and held Wolsey's conduct up as teasing, only she professed to doubt, whether a marriage with a man, so much under the tuition of another, as he was of Erdestone, was desirable; and hinted, that a refusal of him, and an union with one less self-sufficient, even though less ostensibly desirable, might turn out more happily for a girl so eminently lovely, as not to be expected to sink her own claims to admiration, to flatter the vanity of any man, however he might pique himself on being courted. To an union with any other than Erdestone, in preference to Wolsey, Zeluca's *spontaneous disgust* could only be expected; but the *supposed power* of *refusing* Wolsey was a soothing suggestion that mitigated irritation, and she sunk into meditation, composed of satisfaction and sullenness, which continued till the entrance of letters that attracted her attention by her mother's surprise at the enormous size of one packet. Mrs.

Delvayne opened it, and instantly exclaimed "Poetry! 'The Dereborough Ball-room!'"

Zeluca started up, passed her eye over the first page with an avidity and keenness of apprehension that led her instantly to apprehend it was a comparative estimate of the female beauty of the *neighbourhood*—then begged her mother to look at the signature.

It was anonymous.

"But I already *know* the *author*," cried Zeluca—"Read, do read."

"Who, my dear," is the author?"

"Why, Wolsey?" cried Zeluca. "Read, or let me have it—do read; will you? And in obedience to her injunction, enforced by lips as pale as death, and an universal tremor, Mrs. Delvayne began:

"The Dereborough Ball Room, or 'The New Alma, a Poetic Dialogue."

'Hymen his alter rears, in splendid domes,
'Tis gay térsichore his torch illumes;

His votary I—with homage low I bend
To her fair nymphs, while love and prudence
blend
To guide my choice with council from a friend.
My Mentor thou, instruct me where to find
Adorned by beauty the superior mind!
And thou, O Heaven! instruct my ardent aim,
Her heart to touch, whose hand my heart would
claim!

MENTOR.—Instruction on so fair a study's sweet,
 To teach and learn will jointly prove a treat.
 So without prologue.—Country balls admit
 Blood, game, and cocktail, as division fit;
 And first, *les petites gens*, prepare to see,
 As suits habitual custom's fixed decree.
 Then, here, three virgins I present to view,
 Of yesterday—tho' numbering years a few;
 Miss Morleys' pretty are, and rich, I hear;
 But at a *brazier's daughters* all look queer!

LEANDER.—Miss Morleys' are audacious, I must
 think,
 To dare of birth and rank the scornful wink;
 Ambition better metal should supply
 Than brass—I like a wife with modesty.

MENTON.—They are presuming to intrude, 'tis true,
Into a sett, by station, not their due ;
But does not, like presumption, move us all ;
Take heed—nor dare a desperate flight to fall,
One fair, in purest fame so high I'll prove,
'Tis madness, or despair, must ask her love !

“Do make haste mamma,” said Zeluca ; and Mrs. Delvayne proceeded with encreased rapidity :—

But onward let us move, this group survey :
Miss Green, she's pretty—Miss Malone, she's gay :
Miss Jones is fine—her sister is the same,
But up above, will start the promised game.
Now point your piece—but if a dove should fall
Prepare the weapon for the colonel's call.
Ye brave hussars ! sons of love, wine, and war,
Shall simple 'squires presume your will to mar ?
Not so, my friend ; he'll fill the bright champaign
To the mess toast ; “ May C. the *Ring Dove* gain ! ”

LEANDER.—The ring dove, I should say, that
prov'd the maid
Alert in answering ; ‘ Colonel who's afraid ? ’

MENTOR.—Just so my friend—one thought—one
 wish—one aim
 Her soul pervades—a husband.

LEANDER. ————— 'That's no shame,
 All, all the sex, the potent impulse feel.

MENTOR.—They do ; but hearts some fairly win,
 some *steal*,
 And some invoke, with invitation brief,
 And such an one is handsome Miss O'Keefe.

" It is Wolsey," murmured Zeluca,
 without interrupting her mother.

Yon portly knight, a fire-side financier
 At fruitless hospitality makes jeer.
 With gay dragoons, a mint had not suffic'd,
 To get six ugly damsels fairly spliced ;
 So to your *secondes gens* he's kindly free,
 Yet still, there's two Miss Gills for you and me.
 Scarce beyond childhood, Flora Rosemay view,
 And as she's pretty, so she's soft and true.
 Before you, trussed as large as life, behold
 The major's ward, not timid, if not bold ;
 She apes the usage of the *highest class*,
 And affectation will with many pass.

When dressed, and rouged, we wonder that Miss
Day
Sees Autumn fast succeed, to blooming May.
Now look in *all*, the dowager to see
Mark you the *otium cum dignitate*?

“Now!” cried Zeluca, “we shall hear——”

“Yes,” said her mother, and repeating the two foregone lines, continued:—

Proud of her rank, her only thought eclat ;
Yet low the countess, raising smiles, not awe :
First of the first, in Dereborough bills of fame,
We grieve to see, how much is in a name;—
Nor had we called her in our muster roll,
But that her virgin daughter's we must poll.

LEANDER.—Aye ; they her failings will, atone
I guess ?

MENTOR.—They'll shew “ambition's less than
bitterness.”

White locks convey no image to the mind
Of maidens we solicit to be kind.
They pass my friend—they're *passé* as you see,
And will be passed by all who think like me.

“ Good Heavens ! ” cried Zeluca, “ when he knows he must be discovered.”

“ And he has not yet done with them,” said Mrs. Delvayne, with equal satisfaction.

They're twins, one marble block supplied the pair
 (You will allow they are exceeding fair)
 With just one spark of fulsome flame inspired,
 To prove *e'en they* can *wish* to be *admired* !
 Look at this laughing girl—her first debut
 Curtails my power, to speak Miss Dawlish true.

LEANDER.—Not so my friend ; my Asmodeus you,
 The heart, the thought, the mind I hope to view.

MENTOR.—Well, then, at random—heart and
 thought are free ;
 The heart from youth, and thought proverbially :
 And for her mind, to risk a cunning guess,
 'Tis crammed with French—Italian—music—
 dress.

Zeluca stopped her mother, with an
 ejaculation that expressed unexpected sa-

tisfaction, murmured “ *naïveté*, and all passed over... Well, mamma, go on.”

Three damsels now, my friend, attract your eyes,
 Who, to speak plainly, are more nice than wise.
 Their father died, as reverend fathers die,
 Leaving retrenchment to his progeny.
 Miss Welds are rarely seen—at home alone,
 Their pride’s *unwounded* by their splendour gone:
 Tho’ truly good, no praise they ever gain;
 Because to *pity* they accord *disdain*.
 Elvira’s finely moulded form we see,
 (Her pride alone in fault) with apathy;
 And if ’tis true, the intellectual breast
 From the external may be truly guessed:
 Pure as its throne, Bell’s mind we should declare,
 Were we not silenced by her distant air.
 And fair Sophia’s fine blue eye, which says
 How early care has blighted her fair days,
 Is of its magic by herself disarmed,
 For we are more repulsed than we are charmed.

“ I would lay any wager,” cried Zeluca, “ he danced with Bell Weld after we came away! I was sure of that—I—”

“ No, my dear; I *heard* Lady Mary

putting two of *them* into a chair, with explanation upon explanation as the carriage drew up."

"If it wasn't for Wolsey," continued Zeluca, "they would keep up their charter by coming to a ball once a year to complain of slight, and nobody would——"

"But this is *no* praise," interrupted Mrs. Delvayne; "the answer proves that it is not."

LEANDER.—I like them not; the pride that's
the watch,
Th' affront to sieze, and the ill meaning catch,
Bespeaks an unbecoming self-esteem,
Which, far from timid worth—hauteur I deem.

MENTOR.—And something frigid and unsocial
dwells
In her, who neither griefs nor merits tells.
——But, oh! your eye anticipates my speech—
'Name me that lovely pair,' you say, 'don't preach.'

Zeluca suppressed an observation in
breathless attention, yet in an agony of

hope and fear, that almost made her wish to pause, but Mrs. Delvayne continued—

Not sisters are they, tho' in love they vie
With tenderness beyond fraternity;
Their temper's are by nature formed to blend
Thro' happy contrast—union's surest friend.
Oh! truly, in Zeluca's witching smile,
The power's explained of woman to beguile,
Mark you the auburn locks toss'd careless by?
Mark you the meaning in that speaking eye?
Feel you the influence of that form so fair,
Where every limb is *proved* beyond compare?
Ah! could you list her music's tenfold sway;
“Who here refuses homage?” you would say,
Che sara sara; yet her time will come,
For marrying men at Spire are much at home;
And sure the Moly sprig will with'ring prove,
A more than Circean charm in Psyche's love.

“Well,” cried Zeluca, her varying colour fixing in a settled flush that bespoke with resentment, a hope that no loveliness would excite a warmer panegyric, though *tamer qualities* might be made use of to pique her by appropriate

admiration. "Well, Marianne." Mrs. Delvayne read:—

Blest nature ! blest in Marianne's fair name ;
 Good, wise, and beautiful, her spotless fame ;
 But portionless, oh fortune ! to thy shame. }

"Is that all," cried Zeluca,

"Of *her* it is."

"It is Miss Emcotts to the end then?"

"It is, I believe," and Mrs. Delvayne proceeded with the interrupted breath, that proved she felt Zeluca's trepidation.

Now mark the favour'd fair supremely blest,
 In ev'ry gift of heaven's best bounty drest :
 Graceful her height, and beauty's dearest charm,
 Expression in her face, all hearts must warm ;
 Knowledge that might adorn the wisest sage,
 The touching skill that lighter tastes engage—
 Manners so soft, so sweet, the simplest maid
 Might greet her notice, and not feel afraid,
 In her combine.—She her own sex adore,
 While men must love her, who ne'er lov'd before ;
 Yet, Ah ! my friend, Maria Emcotts view
 As one denied by Heaven to me or you.

All tow'ring high, the manchineal tree
Attracts th' unwary to its treacherous shade;
Its poisonous buds too late the victims see—
So, by despair, is love's presumption paid.

“Detested villian!” cried Zeluca, giving vent to the feelings, that had gradually swelled almost to suffocation by the time her mother concluded, “Oh, that I could tear her soul to pieces, as he has done mine!” and snatching the verses from her mother's hand, she tore them into a thousand pieces.

Mrs. Delvayne grew pale as death—
“For God's sake, my beloved girl, do not be so violent; you——”

Zeluca interrupted, with an hysterical laugh—“Don't be so violent,” repeated she.
“Oh, how admirably I too could preserve my sweet lipping complacency, and advise *another* not to resent being made a wretch for life!” She burst into tears, and Mrs. Delvayne losing sight of her insolence, in sympathy for her sorrow, and hoping her tears were the fore-runner

of a calm, again said, "My dearest girl, you are too precipitate: what reason is there for putting these down to Wolsey?"

Grief gave way to passion, at the doubt Zeluca felt such frivolous consolation, "Oh, God!" cried she, "if I could but die before that wretch shall have the glory of triumphing over me. 'Tis I hope, that every curse may light upon them. She has the *evil*—I will write and tell him that—oh, that every one of their detestable brats might be disfigured with it, besides that—oh, I will find a way to turn his careless 'Ha ha's', and his joyous smiles, into wretched discontented shewing off! No; because he is a man he shall not *enjoy* the privilege of jilting me with the pitiful salvo that he did not make an offer. He hates her—he knows he hates her, and she shall know it too!"

Mrs. Delvayne saw her cast her eyes on the writing-table with dismay; she well knew how little effect such information would have on Miss Emcotts, and

warned Zeluca that *nothing* would change the determination of a woman in love. But, at the same time, she endeavoured, *with a hope*, to sooth her into temperate investigation. "I cannot, my love," said she, "I cannot think why you so determinately put them down to Wolsey."

"Because," cried Zeluca, "I am not an idiot—because I can recal what passed last night, and put sentiments and circumstances together—because there are so many reasons, patience itself could not pause to repeat them to *teazing incredulity*;—does there want another than the detestable pedantry—the new alma' empty headed coxcomb, I detest and despise him; but that is why I cannot endure to be rejected by him. Oh, if I could but have had the power to reject—and so I should, I dare say," she proceeded, malignantly eying her mother, "If I had not submitted to my elders, those who knew the world, and undertook to manœuvre me through it; if I had managed

myself, I should not now be held up by an abandoned profligate as the jest and butt of the neighbourhood, and the victim of Lady Naglefort's art, who can prosper in *her politics* without the credit of *intriguing*."

"Mrs. Delwayne, in spite of her participation in Zeluca feelings, could not hear herself involved as the prime agent of her disturbance without resentment, and she prevented her proceeding, by saying, "Is it possible, Zeluca, you can misrepresent the care and pains that has proved you through life the only object of my solicitude! such ingratitude I did not think possible!"

"Ingratitude!" repeated Zeluca, discrediting *real anguish* by a vehemence that proved the predominance of stronger anger. "Ingratitude for your maternal kindness in selecting the hour in which I am overwhelmed with grief to call over all my foibles. Ingratitude for what?" continued she, in a peremptory tone, "it was

for your own pleasure you acted as you did. What did you get rid of Susan Harmer and Miss Marlowe for, by ten thousand arts and falsehoods, but to please yourself? I shouldn't have cared if they had told all the world I had been passionate.

"Passionate would not have been the simple characteristic of your temper they would have propagated," said Mrs. Delvayne, in a faint voice, and with a faint idea her daughter was returning *evil for evil* in the conduct she arraigned as *ungrateful*.

"Well, if they had called me a devil," retorted Zeluca, "how came I so? you must give me an account of that; you take merit enough for my education when it is applauded; and I only exhibit now what I learnt of you."

"I have, indeed, been too indulgent," said Mrs. Delvayne; and hiding her face in her hands, deep sobs issued from her bosom. Zeluca was momentarily touched, yet she presently recollected, with indignation at her mother, that she had *real*

sorrows to weep for ; and after a pause, without breaking the silence by one word she quitted the room. Mrs. Delvayne's reflections went the bitter round of regret and repentance, and appalling anticipation. But constitutionally and habitually guarded and wary, she soon regained her self-possession, and gathered up the fragments of the verses that were scattered over the room, lest the servants should combine the circumstance with the high tone of Zeluca and develope the truth. Her own tears too she felt another corroborating hint, and she endeavoured to remove the traces of them, though the despondence and violence she looked forward to weighed oppressively on her heart. Her love for her daughter, however, soon brought to recollection the deeper cast of her sufferings—and sympathy for her subdued remaining indignation ; she surmounted the repugnance of insulted affection, and hastened to Zeluca, to warn her to conceal from

all observers the traces of disturbance that would rouse enquiry ; and to say, that she might come down, as she had desired to be denied. Zeluca, at her repeated request, opened her door ; her eyes were swelled with weeping, but she was perfectly calm ; and in answer to her mother's cautions, however essential she felt them, only said, she should take care not to do any thing she repented.

“ Are you going out, my love ? ” asked Mrs. Delvayne, observing she was putting on her habit.

Zeluca answered, she supposed a ride down to Marianne, was not among the interdictions she intended to authorize Wolsey in imposing.

“ No,” answered Mrs. Delvayne ; and again bursting into tears, sought her own room for concealment. She too late saw that, for her daughter's prosperity, she ought not to have abjured all authority ; but having admitted the *foible* of over indulgence, there self-

reproach ceased. She did not see she was chargeable with having transfused her own lax principles into her daughter's breast ; or that the mind of a worldly *mother* must be regenerated ere she can applaud herself on giving to her *child* a good education. Mrs. Delvayne passed a solitary morning, but not solely in sorrow ; she soon summoned the discernment and knowledge of the world, that would help her to a resource, if any was to be found. And having first recalled as much as possible the verses she adopted Zeluca's conviction that they were Wolsey's ; and turned in her mind, the manœuvres by which he might be diverted from following up a panegyric that had no foundation *in love*, if Zeluca could be so far worked upon as to hide her indignation under a display of unparticipated *grief* and *tenderness*.

CHAP. II.

“Misery is inseparable from Vice—the concurrence of every fortunate circumstance cannot produce Happiness, or even Tranquillity, independant of conscious Integrity, for any tolerable Tranquillity is incompatible with Perfidy and Fraud.”—DR. MOORE.

ALTHOUGH Zeluca only signified an intention of riding to Cowerby, she stayed to dinner in utter disregard of her mother's known determination to pass the day without admitting any company ;

and she even seemed to feel it a sacrifice to put into her hand the verses she did not own to having written out from a copy of Marianne's, till Mrs. Delvayne repeated her regret several times at not being able to read them again. Mrs. Delvayne asked Marianne's opinion of the author? Zeluca simply answered, she thought, as all people in their senses must, that it was Wolsey. "What does she think of her own panegyric, my dear?" asked Mrs. Delvayne, perseveringly determined to bring Zeluca to adopt her conciliating measures. "She thinks three miserable lines of yea and nay praise, is much on a par with being cried up to the skies, to be sunk below such a *thing* as *Miss Emcotts*.—" I suppose so," added Zeluca; for I did not ask her; I was thinking of *myself*." And she rung for candles to retire for the night as she spoke. The next morning Mrs. Delvayne again started the subject, with a view to

suggest the most adviseable deportment to Wolsey; but after an answer equally laconic, Zeluca rose to quit the room, though rather with air of internal pre-engagement than of sullenness. Mrs. Delwayne was most anxious to proceed upon system, and was uttering a petition to her stay, when, at the entrance of letters, Zeluca voluntarily turned back. The last that Mrs. Delwayne opened she read and re-read, and in silence folded up.

"Why, that is the Dereborough post-mark," said Zeluca.

"Yes, my dear."

"But that is not a very common thing," pursued Zeluca. "You don't wonder that I am curious, though you may not choose to satisfy my curiosity?"

"Why, my dear girl, it is a letter that I am sure can be productive of no good to you, though such is its aim."

"Yet I suppose you will allow me an opinion, as I am the topic?" asked Zeluca, authoritatively, and she advanced

to the table where her mother sat ; but, before she reached it, Mrs. Delvayne unfolded the letter, and saying she would willingly communicate its contents, without waiting for an answer, read :—

“ *Madam,*

“ Report assigns your young and
“ beautiful daughter to Mr. Wolsey; and
“ with a view to rescue all that is lovely
“ and accomplished in woman, from all
“ that is profligate, and dishonourable,
“ and treacherous in man, I overcome my
“ natural repugnance to an anonymous
“ charge, and warn you to interfere for
“ your daughter’s sake. If she demurs,
“ as I think she must, at sacrificing
“ herself to a coxcomb, who has no-
“ thing but a showy person, let her
“ know that I can publish actions of his,
“ for which he has contrived to evade a
“ prosecution, only through his smatter-
“ ing of the law. This is a fact that, in
“ one instance, I can vouch for; and though

" I confess I would not expose myself to
 " the resentment of his powerful relations,
 " yet I will publish his infamous conduct
 " if Miss Delwayne, or any other young
 " lady *worth saving*, should so far prove
 " the assimilation of *love* and *weakness*
 " as to disregard my counsel, and con-
 " tinue to encourage his addresses.

" I am, Madam,

" Your sincere Friend,

" MENTORIA."

" Productive of no good!" exclaimed
 Zeluca, almost too eager to let her mother
 finish. " It is productive of *all* good! I
 know you'll tell me it won't stop Miss
 Emcotts from taking him; but——"

Mrs. Delwayne interrupted her. " My
 " dear love, no visionary could have such
 an expectation!"

" But it ought!" cried Zeluca; " and if
 it does *not*, it will prove I *refused him*
first; and I wish for nothing better than
 to shew that letter all the world over."

“ You wish it *now*, Zeluca ; but you will ever after regret it, if you shew it to one individual being. The author might be forgiven and *ridiculed* on the score of its being the desperate ebullition of despair, and jealousy, and *inexperience* ; but trust me, my dear girl, it will prove any thing, but that you *refused* him ; or that there is a word to be said against his moral character. Oh ! Zeluca, why should the author be concealed from every body else, when the *first sentence* discovered *her to me* ? ”

“ That is not true, or you would not have read it ten times over,” cried Zeluca, “ besides *you know my* feelings ; *he*, for as he is, thinks there are ten women at least would do the same thing. But, if it is mine, give it me ? ”

The letter was safe in Mrs. Delvayne’s pocket, nor would she yield it to the demand ; she answered instead, “ Wolsey is conceited, and moreover ingenuous, and credulous, with him alone, to deal with—

with *good acting* you might escape detection ; but Lady Naglefort, my love—consider,” pursued Mrs. Delvayne, in the greatest trepidation, “ consider the disgrace, the stigma, the everlasting ridicule that would attach to such an act ; it would entirely subvert the fame of an *admired and courted* young woman ; even if a *proof* of his treachery was at command, the world’s opinion would sink his *delinquency* in *her desperation*.”

“ I have a proof of his treachery at command !” cried Zeluca ; “ he would not dare deny but that an offer of himself was on his lips, and that I prevented it ; and this I will shew and prove, that on my rejection *he, in desperation*, made a tender of himself to Miss Emcotts.”

“ Detestable wretch !” cried she, “ would any body but you, after his making a *public sacrifice* of me, to her, scruple retaliating on him.”

“ But if nobody is duped by the letter if——”

Zeluca interrupted her mother in an agony. "I tell you every body will be duped; who, but you, knows I would do it: does not every body else think I would have recourse to Erdestone. I have always claimed him. Wolsey was jealous of him last week, though now—I well know it is that vile wary Erdestone—but I will have this triumph over Wolsey," she concluded, "though my instantaneous death was to follow."

Mrs. Delvayne thought with the apostle, 'All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient.' And when she found Zeluca's thirst for vengeance drew a defence of her rash immature plan out of every argument on its inexpediency, she changed her ground. "Ascertain that the verses are *absolutely his*, my dear girl," said she, "and I would stop at nothing to forward your revenge—but coolly to see you plunge yourself into difficulty, through an error and misconception, I could never forgive to myself."

"Coolly, indeed!" ejaculated Zeluca, "Cool enough to drive me mad—I know you—I know you well—you would wait till the infamy of desertion attends me wherever I go, and then you would shew me what well laid plans you had methodized with scientific collusion; only that it was impossible to put them in practice, before they were rendered nugatory. Marianne is as sure it is Wolsey as I am. Is not his staying away from Spire all yesterday a confirmed proof? But if you will not give me the letter Marianne shall."

"Good God, Zeluca! How many have you written?"

"How many," returned Zeluca, with a sneer: "that shews how you enter into the thing: how many should I write? who, besides you and Marianne, should have been supposed interested in my throwing myself away?—you see I know how to plan—I don't proceed in *desperation*; I only mistook in supposing you

would not object to my gaining what reparation there is to be gained. I would not but put the letter into his hand myself, and signify my consequent contempt of him, for the salvation of the whole world!" And while vaunting her *precautionary skill*, with flashing eyes and vehement gestures, she seized a pen, and demanded Marianne's letter, as her mother was *too delicate* to wound Mr. Wolsey's delicacy, by shewing him his own portrait in her's.

Mrs. Delvayne felt the anticipated agony of her shame and conviction, and forgetting that a request for the letter, that could barely have come to hand, must prove her to Marianne the author of it, she was glad to see the claim on her own relinquished, and retained it, in hope of some fortuitous occurrence intervening to turn Zeluca from her object: and again, she attempted to raise a *doubt* that might be effectual. "Consider," she resumed, "what would be the state of your mind,

if you should be discovered to be the author of a slander against Wolsey, after having ascertained him *not* to be the author of the verses!" Zeluca's silence, with the sudden colour that flushed her cheek, gave Mrs. Delvayne encouragement, and she continued, "You would then lose him by your own means—for lose him you would—a man will forgive any act of injustice or vehemence that involves *another*, if love for himself is at the bottom of it—but he recoils from the *actor*, as well as the *action*, if his own peace or fame is so far threatened as to keep him personally in *dread* of the *effects* of *love*. And the prejudice against anonymous information is so prevalent and notorious, that opprobrium would attach, even if truth—if facts——"

"And is not mine truth?" interrupted Zeluca: her fluctuating decision brought to a crisis, by the arrogance that was as tenacious of the praise of veracity, as if all her practices were not founded in

falsehood. "It is a fact that I would have prosecuted him, if I had had a *legal* right; and you *know* he is as guilty as if he gave me that right; *you know*, because you warn me I shall *lose him*; therefore you feel, that, in effect, he has professed himself to be mine! no, no; I will not be juggled out of my plan till it is too late to put it in execution. I——" but she stopped to exclaim, that Mrs. Serle's carriage was entering the sweep; and made a movement to deliver injunctions to the servant not to admit them on any account.

But Mrs. Delvayne prevented her, by insisting on the *policy* of repaying triumph with nonchalance. To that, however, Zeluca was unequal, having said she *would stay and make her mother shew Miss Emcotts the letter*; she grew so faint, that she was obliged to slip out as they entered the house, to Mrs. Delvayne's ineffable satisfaction, when she understood the *consequence* of her remaining.

Mrs. Delvayne's suspense, her anxieties, and her profound chagrin lay well wrapped up in the polite alacrity and self-possession with which she welcomed the favour of a morning visit from Miss Emcotts, whose time, she said, she always felt ashamed of engrossing, knowing its bare sufficiency for the innumerable calls on it. And, with unpausing alacrity, she continued, "Zeluca is the unluckiest creature in the world; it is not, I assure you, ten minutes since she took her departure, and with a wish to see you on her lips."

"O, then it is unlucky we both are," cried Miss Emcotts—"that we did not meet. I wonder, for no-doubt she is gone to call on us. I could have set her wild of the verses, as she heard?"

"Verses—no," returned Mrs. Delvayne, "I have heard her mention no verses."

"La! I suppose, my dear, they were only sent to you," said Mrs. Serle; "such a packet," proceeded she to Mrs. Del-

vayne, "Miss Emcotts had by the post, yesterday; I——"

"Lord bless me!" interrupted Mrs. Delvayne, "I *had* a most ponderous lot of *lines* by the post too, I thought you was alluding to *poetry*."

"Why *local* pictures, poetic or prosaic, must be interesting to those sketched, let the merit of the artist be what it will," said Mrs. Serle.

"Exactly so," cried Mrs. Delvayne, "I was infinitely amused; but so angry with Zéluka: she got as far as the Whitelocks, then tore the epic in half, and into a thousand pieces, before I could rise and stop her. I scolded her for an hour; I have no patience with her nicety, scurrilous—it was nothing but a quiz. But she will contend it was not an harmless quiz, which is her delight, but such a piece of malignity, as could only proceed from a bad heart; and I don't like to discourage strictness of principle—it is too rare now."

Miss Emcotts countenance assumed the encreasing significance that warned Mrs. Delvayne she was not sufficiently a novice to be humbled by the artifice mortification had recourse to ; a *ruse de moralité* was equally at her command as at Mrs. Delvayne's, and so she proved. "O," cried she, "it is very wicked Miss Delvayne is—for the verses are *good* ; and *satire* is the weapon of the *maralist* ; with her, I think on Lady Whitelocks they are too severe—at the most incapable sneer I would not ; for what we are education has made us all—ourselves we are nothing !"

Mrs. Delvayne saw it would be impossible to make Miss Emcotts ashamed of her own panegyric, or of publishing it ; effectual as she had often found *the liberality* of signifying satire was repressed by good nature ; and *the benevolence* of fighting another's cause for her own purposes. She therefore thought it best to intimate that the pique (she was sure

she had betrayed) was from a transient sympathy with Zeluca, and by suggesting a laugh *against her*, give a secondary importance to the subject that would best conceal her conviction of Wolsey's claim to the verses, and consequent secession; on which was her single reliance for Zeluca's escaping detection, as the fabricator of the letter, she did not hope to deter her from publishing.

"I told Zeluca," cried she, "her own praises would have made her more tolerant of the twin sisters depreciation; for I verily believe she took a peep and saved herself the mortification of reading her own caricature."

"She is praised excessively," cried Mrs. Serle, echoed by Miss Emcotts, who, struck by Mrs. Delvayne's manner, felt, indeed, a doubt, whether she had read the verses; and consequently, whether she had lighted upon the author.

"Well," pursued Mrs. Delvayne, "if she had been abused I should not have

been angry ; she is such a wild thing, that if she had been accused of dancing, as if she meant to make her partner run off with her, I should have owned appearances justified the satire. But the worst is, she is the kind of *flirt* that turns nothing to account : I tell her desirable *men* are lost upon her—a Dutch *harlequin* would do to dance about, and then lay by, as she does man after man.”

Miss Emcotts again shewed she suspected Mrs. Delvayne was aware of a *stroke* she was counteracting with all her recondite powers ; and with heartfelt glee she repeated—“ Oh ! extolled you will see she is, more than much. Vain, if we please, she and I may be, only fear I, when to see them you come, you will say, ‘ No fame is it to *participate* a *panegyric* with me, who have no pretensions.”

Mrs. Delvayne, for once, found a compliment impracticable.

Her deficiency, however, was not noticed ; for Miss Emcotts preceeded—“ As

the verses you have not seen Mrs. Delvayne, I will send you a copy ; for of the author I must have your opinion."

" Oh, I know the author !" cried Mrs. Delvayne, " from the very little I read ; there I've no doubt—I should not care what sum I hazarded on its being Cassenberd. But I wish to see them again."

" O Lord, bless me, Mrs. Delvayne ! how can you think them Captain Cassenberd's ?" said Mrs. Serle, with a significant look at Miss Emcotts, who continued—
" Again you shall read them, before *such* a decision you give."

Mrs. Delvayne said she would, and *unconvince* herself if possible ; on which Mrs. Serle rose and gave her a pressing invitation to come to her the next evening ; for music, *in perfection*, without any anti-harmonic interlopers, as she promised to have nobody besides the professor, who stopped, at Miss Emcotts request, in his way to embark for the Continent ; and Miss Emcotts added entreaties, with an

assurance he would find a pleasure in playing with Miss Delvayne she could not give him, which Mrs. Delvayne *thought likely*, so agreed to go; glad to seize on any *new stimulus* to Zeluca's concentrated feelings.

Mrs. Serle, therefore, took leave, repeating thanks, that Miss Delvayne would complete their musical treat; adding, that they should have it all to themselves—no addition, but just Lady Naglefort and Mr. Erdestone, who was one of themselves; “and Mr. Wolsey,” concluded Mrs. Serle, “whose taste is so improved by Miss Delvayne—I suppose—that I think he will be one of ourselves.”

Mrs. Delvayne kept an unchanged tone and countenance—anticipated the treat for Zeluca with delight—accompanied her friends chatting to the door—begged the verses might be sent directly; and added, (when they were seated in the carriage, and driving off) “You’ve taken me in, in not giving your author; but mind, we’re

upon honour. You are not to tell Cassenberd I have dubbed him the Dereborough satyrism till I have read them "through?" and then she pursued them with such a glance, as proved she would willingly have buried them, and their triumph, in the bowels of the earth. She saw directly she had been taken in to witness Wolsey's transition to Miss Emcotts; for he was not named till she had fixed to go; and the professor she believed all a fabrication.

Zeluca would, indeed, have been invited to entertain a musical amateur, for a better musician lady players could not afford; yet she knew that to entertain a judge and fashionist, fresh from metropolitan exhibitions, Miss Emcotts would have been induced to sink rivalry for the time being, and have joined Zeluca in consultation, selection, and practice; that by real excellence they might make amends for failure in the last *novelties* and *newest coxombries* of science, in an age where *pedantry* is assumed to give due notice to inferiority to

gaze, to envy, and to struggle for the elevation conferred by the communication that comprehends the privilege of copying. The smallness of the party she was sensible was planned to preclude Zeluca an *affected* occupation, even with aught but her own defeat; to send an excuse, however, was a confession of humiliation Mrs. Delwayne was too good an actress ever to have recourse to for herself; nor could she bear to think of it for Zeluca, to whose eager questions she dared not deny Miss Emcotts *triumph*, lest bursting suddenly upon her an explosion of rage might follow that would be absolutely insurmountable. But she followed up her information by still asserting her own hopes of disappointment to the heiress, and an adjuration to patience—a *degree* of patience till the fact should be ascertained. “Think, my dear girl,” she continued, “if you had sent the hasty note you wrote to Marianne! I did not recollect at the

moment, but it was equivalent to confessing yourself the author of the letter, and of course debars you from putting it upon any opportune blunderer."

"It is gone, however!" cried Zeluca; "you might be sure I should take it out of the room with me, and desire James to fly with it; if you had told me of your *thinkings in time* indeed!—But she will never dare tell her suspicions."

"Her *proof*," exclaimed Mrs. Delvayne, "*she* will have a *proof* in the investigation and inquest I foresee! Oh, Zeluca, Zeluca!"

"Well, who is the sufferer but I," retorted Zeluca, "if you had exerted the foresight you are so proud of, I should have been glad enough of the hint, I could have got the letter from *her* in a thousand ways; don't blame me for your own oversights!"

"True, my dear," returned the agitated worn out mother, sensible of the ad-

ditional evil of altercation, "Good God!" she cried, starting up at the sound of the sweep gate, "here is Wolsey."

But Zeluca did *not* hasten out of the room as she expected.

"Now if you stay to see him," resumed Mrs. Delvayne, "let me conjure——"

"If I stay," interrupted Zeluca, with flushing eyes, and cheeks of vermillion, "why should I——"

"Very true," conceded Mrs. Delvayne, seeking, by admitting an ill-timed hint, to prove Zeluca *could only* adopt *conciliation*, "you are very right to see him—to behave with more than usual complacency, and as *much despondency* as you please. By other conduct you may bring yourself into irremediable repentance—how many chances might keep him away yesterday; and he might even write the verses as a trial of your *love*—of your *temper*;—do not, for God's sake, let him see the letter; it will be the ruin of us!"

Whether the gnawing wretchedness of

Zeluca's feelings rendered it soothing to her to inflict pain on others; or whether her mother's exhortations stimulated her presumptuous spirit to repay opposition by obstinacy, she cast a look of insolent disdain on Mrs. Delvayne, which Wolsey entered in time to prevent her giving utterance to, as she turned to greet him (though she could not lift her eyes to his) with a low curtesy—and "Oh! gracious and beneficent Miss Emcotts—lowliest of the lowly, and *softest* of the *soft*!—is the bridegroom elect *spared* for a *congé* morning."

Mrs. Delvayne internally blest herself, that though spite and envy were apparent, Zeluca's encreasing agitation rendered her voice so low and tremulous, that *rage* could not be imputed to her; and in the eager hope she could still take a hint to *assume* *pleasantry*; before Wolsey could answer her, she said, "Mr. Wolsey, you are very right, those who *have*; and those who *have not loved before*,

cannot do a wiser thing, than love Miss Emcotts."

"Now you go too far," cried Wolsey. "I am *universally* charged with being a bridegroom elect; but this is the first time *love* is imputed to me as the source of that determination."

"What!" cried Zeluca, with an agonizing mixture of hope and fear, "Do you send forth verses, blazing with love for Miss Emcotts, and *own interest* is the inducement to matrimony?"

Wolsey sunk a half smile in instantaneous gravity.

"The verses are charged by some," said he, "with a mock passion for Miss Emcotts, as a *blind* to the *real* one cautiously suppressed; that was the joke against me from Trollope, as I entered your gate."

Zeluca grew so pale, so consciously pale, that she endeavoured to hide her *humiliating* hopes, by plucking the dead leaves off a rose tree; relying on

her mother's alacrity, who observed,
 "Well: I declare I see no suppressed passion for another."

"No," cried Wolsey—

'Blest nature! blest in Marianne's name,
 Good, wise, and beautiful her spotless fame:
But portionless, ah! fortune to thy shame.

Those comprehensive lines, I am told, denote any thing but a spontaneous propensity to matrimony *with* Miss Emcotts."

"So, that is it at last!" exclaimed Zeluca, to whom, with agonized *certainly*, returned voice, and indignation, and the unfettered faculties that enabled her to recal a thousand minutes tokens of Wolsey's inherent, subdued partiality for Marianne. "So," she repeated, "you really like stu——"

Mrs. Delvayne pressed so hard on Zeluca in adjusting the blind, that she stopped with instinctive repentance; and her mother concluded. "So, you really, as Zeluca says, like *studious* women. I

must not utter one word in dispraise of Marianne before her cousin here ; or, I would say, I am not an admirer of still life." Whatever preference Mrs. Delvayne understood Wolsey to have confessed for Marianne, her *want* of fortune was obviously not forgotten ; and as the repugnance that blended with Miss Emcotts name was equally obvious, she believed her poetical eulogy was but to publish, that he was not yet (as she knew Lady Naglefort would term it) drawn in by Zeluca. She was, therefore, most anxious to stop Zeluca's treacherous depreciation of Marianne, with whom, and with Miss Emcotts, she believed she might still enter the lists, if she would but command temper to play her cards well. And Wolsey's deportment favoured her opinion ; for there was a laughing expression in his eye that discountenanced serious thoughts of either as he answered. " You, perhaps, Mrs. Delvayne, like an enchantress who 'vengees on the

brink of all we hate;' and Marianne," said he, changing his tone, "has no one talent for artificial excitation."

Zeluca cast a look at him Mrs. Delvayne stepped before her to hide; but staggered; as she herself was, and eager to prevent *Zeluca's* crying down Marianne, her voice lost somewhat of its habitual complacency in replying "I am an *iconomague*—I oppose the worship of *images*."

Zeluca had transferred all hatred and all malignity to Marianne—*doubt* no longer gave to her spirits and deportment; the restlessness of fluctuating hope; and the interval for reflection Mrs. Delvayne's short sentence afforded, 'though in time's record nearly nought,' had enabled revenge and malice to combine, and foresee, and plan. She would trust to no *prudential* resignations where love lay latent; she resolved Marianne should be, in Wolsey's *wishes*, *excluded* the *happy* lot, of which she considered she had deprived *her*; and she came to the resolution of fixing the letter on

Marianne. And when passion settled into rancorous determined revenge, or systematic plan, no external coincidence was wanting in Zeluca's well-assumed manner.

"But our neighbourhood produces prose writers, as well as poets, Mr. Wolsey," said she. "Mamma has received a letter this morning, which, as you are the subject, I have been telling her you ought to see."

Mrs. Delvayne beheld, with surprise, the calmness with which she spoke, and with dismay, the fixed determination that shewed her purpose irrevocable: she believed it, therefore, unless to say, she had lost the letter, and put it into Wolsey's out stretched hand; but while he read it, she whispered, in hopeless submission, "Marianne can convict you by your own hand."

"If I do not first convict *her*," returned Zeluca.

Wolsey tossed the letter on the table with indignation, palpable in every fea-

ture, and in the vehement tone with which he exclaimed—"The author of that senseless scrawl is much mistaken in hoping to avoid *the resentment* that will be quite as unpleasant as that of my *opulent relations*! There is always some clue to get at this description of mischief-makers; and this is such a flimsy attempt to stigmatize me, that he——"

"*He*," interrupted Zeluca: "I should say *she*; it is a woman's signature, and it evidently originates in jealousy. Of course, of Miss Emcotts there is cause; but why your fluctuating civility to me should have alarmed the lady's love, I——"

"Love!" exclaimed Wolsey, eagerly proceeding "Love! 'such love is direful as the fiercest hate!' By the eternal God, I would rather trudge the country, the half-starved exhibitor of a brood of tigresses and hyenas, than I would trust myself within the *amorous* fangs of such a woman. No; it is *not* a

woman," he added, either ashamed of having so promptly *appropriated* the *imputed passion*, or really incredulous.

"It may be jealousy, and of Miss Emcotts, or of *any body*, and yet be a man."

"I, however, firmly believe it is a woman," said Mrs. Delvayne, taking it up with an examining air; but inly hopeless of Zeluca's stroke of policy, which, if a strong a penchant to Marianne did exist, left *her* at once the influence of *love* and *justice* in undeceiving Wolsey. Zeluca, she saw, must eventually be proclaimed the author, whoever she attempted to fix it on: so in despair and despondence solely, she attempted to further her object.

Wolsey seemed not actually to embrace her opinion; he appeared bewildred by a variety of conjectures; yet he broke off the eager utterance of them, on the servant's entrance with a packet to Zeluca, that contained a letter and note. But as Zeluca gave the billet to her mother in si-

tence, after reading it, he recollected he had no reason to suppose it referred to the subject that engrossed him, and resumed—"The worst of these cursed subterfuges of cowardice and malice is, that they lead one to inculcate the guiltless—let me look again," said he, getting more and more anxious. "You must give me the letter, Mrs. Delvayne. I don't think Medicott—to be sure he is *afraid* of losing her," he murmured. "By heavens! it is Valcrest," he cried. "Aye, the jealousy comes home better there than with Miss Emcotts. What an insufferable dolt was I not to light upon him at the first moment!" and he approached the bell, determined not to lose an instant; observing "I never should have suspected Medicott for one instant; but the verses to which he cannot own without raising all the Whitelocks up in arms, impulsively led me to involve him in an anonymous attack."

Zeluca laid her hand on his, and prevented the bell sounding, yet she could not articulate.

Mrs. Delvayne, with scarcely less real, yet no visible emotion, said, "Is Medlicott considered the author? I gave them to Cassenberd at first, but it seemed decided against me, that it was you?"

"That's a general decision, I find," cried Wolsey; "but I give them incontestibly to Medlicott, so you——" he stopped; for Zeluca, paler than death, attempted to conceal her faintness with a smile, and gratitude and tenderness superseded his assumed *careless* renunciation. He put his departure on a new plea. "I undertook a commission for Lady Naglefort this morning," said he, "and I never disappoint her; so I must be off;" and he pulled the bell, for Zeluca had not strength to counteract his intention—she raised her hand, but fell lifeless into his arms.

Wolsey called to her mother to procure

aid, and pressed her to his heart, in the fervour of gratitude, love, and admiration. Mrs. Delwayne, with the assistance of water and hartshorn, soon restored her; and, perhaps, never in her life felt such impulsive gratitude to her God, as at the concentration of every evil passion, and wearying dread, and perturbation, in the *hope* and *conviction* that had overruled ZelUCA, at so timely a juncture, that Wolsey could entertain no doubt her *horror* of an encounter with Valcreat was the *sole* cause. The event was doubly blest; it not only conveyed all that was endearing to an enamoured heart, but it bespoke a delicacy of nerve so little consonant with the rancorous malignity and daring presumption in those charges against him that were under scrutiny, that Mrs. Delwayne was persuaded Wolsey's frank and generous nature, would decide by the circumstance that touched his feelings, and never admit a *thought* of ZelUCA's being the culprit; and from

the cognizance of others, she resolved by *some means*, for ever to keep it. When Zeluca opened her eyes, she turned them on Wolsey, faintly uttering, "Oh, don't go," and closed them again in bliss, at his whispered assurance, that he *would never leave* her. But while silent and motionless, her mind was not inactive, nor her faculties obscured; she beheld the dilemma to which her daring precipitation and disdain of advice had reduced her; and recollected that the abhorred letter hung *in terrorum* over her head *unexplained*—while not to explain it, favourably, was to lose Wolsey, at the very opportunity of fixing him *for ever*. The thought was not to be endured—falsehood—perjury—treachery—every still existing restraint on entangled intrigue she felt must be at the service of the predominating good that was within her grasp; and she scrupled not to avail herself of the only expedient that was adequate to her purpose; she resolved to make Ma-

rienne the tool to the attainment of her wishes, instead of the victim of her revenge, by the unaltered plan of fixing the letter on her. So raising her head from the sofa, on which Wolsey had placed her with all the tenderness of persuasion, she observed that her mother, Marianne, and herself, had all put the verses down to him. Mrs. Delvayne understood her comprehensive look in uttering Marianne's name; and she *motioned acquiescence*, while Wolsey said he was aware of it; for the verses had been charged on him from all quarters.

"But the letter—", said Zeluca, and paused.

"Is the production," pursued Mrs. Delvayne, "of female ambition, pique, and inexperience."

"It is a woman's, *believe* my solemn assurance," repeated Zeluca.

"I don't doubt it; I shall pass it by as such!" cried Wolsey.

Yet, Mrs. Delvayne as well as Zeluca,

saw his assertion only as the promise of considerate love. "Mr. Wolsey," said Mrs. Delvayne impressively, "it is useless to argue against Mr. Valcrest being the author by any rule of rationality or reason, in such acts of intemperate impulse—the desperation of the moment defies reason. This is a maxim well understood by all who have observed, that when passion, of whatever kind, gains predominance the *most reasonable*, are the *most glaring* defaulters from their accustomed discretion. I will not then tell you *why* this *cannot* be Mr. Valcrest's, or Mr. Medlicott's, or Miss Emcott's; (for it might belong to any one of them) but that it is the production of an individual, the more likely to risk such an act, as she felt sure of being *unsuspected*."

Wolsey's countenance exhibited every token of curiosity. "I must know *who* it is," said he. "If you think, and if I can *believe* it to be woman, I pledge you my honour, that neither by act, or hint,

or insinuation, any more than by word, will I ever refer to the circumstance."

With admirable adroitness Mrs. Del-vayne made a favour of receiving the voluntary promise, Zeluca's eagerness prompted her to follow up without delay, but her mother resumed—"Frank and handsome as is your promise Mr. Wolsey, and highly as I think of you, above all men, I could not let the letter pass uninvestigated; unless I did *indeed know the author*. A mother feels for every young woman who is on the point of fixing her fate. Did I not *know* you were slandered, vague and ridiculous as is the charge against you, I should publish it that none might be led into repentance.

"Repentance!—repentance!" repeated Wolsey, proudly susceptible of the possibility of doubt. "There is no method of *daring* these lurking calumniators to adopt publicity; it is easier to set to work and ferret them out, and then public recantation——"

Zeluca interrupted him. "Oh! mamma, will you never rest till you get her exposed?" an adjuration her *looks interpreted*. "How can you carry your audacity to the extent of making *him* a petitioner?"

"My dear," said Mrs. Delvayne, "I meant not to bring exposure on her, but only to prove to Mr. Wolsey, that it is my firm *conviction* that leads me to join in your *wish* of *hiding her fault*, rather than punish her by an investigation"—She stopped; for Wolsey was struck by the agitation in Zeluca, that directed his suspicions to no *common acquaintance*. Zeluca, indeed, recollecting the possible *effect* of such an act of love in Marianne, when the odium of it died away, almost pondered on the eligibility of *owning her own* crude undigested *effervescence* of passion, as she termed it, till the classification with *tygers* and *hyenas* warned her that Wolsey's excited tenderness would, at least, subside at the moment she was bringing it

to account, and, perhaps, never to return. Her fluctuating colour proved the internal warfare, between *compunction* grounded on *jealousy*, and the security that was within her grasp. Mrs. Delvayne saw her agitation, and Wolsey's observation of it, and hastened to turn it to best account. "My dear love," said she, "I cannot endure that your affection for your cousin should thus produce detrimental emotion; suspense shall at least be over. Mr. Wolsey, *but two* letters were written—one to me—one Miss Bessaly received *herself* this morning at the same time—need I say she was the author."

"Impossible!" said Wolsey; but he paced the room, repeating "Impossible!" in a tone that proved all Mrs. Delvayne's foregone arguments, and all the *probability* that he should have become an object of solicitude to Marianne, was gradually undermining the asserted *impossibility*." Zeluca was half faint again, but Wolsey turned on Mrs. Delvayne's recommenda-

tion of water, and gave her the glass with a look of such *approving* fondness, that she burst into a timely flood of tears.

Mrs. Delwayne then resumed—"No false tenderness for Zeluca's feelings must permit me to leave you in *doubt* of her cousin's unseemly dereliction from her usual self; you saw the letter brought in just now, similar to mine: had it come ten minutes sooner, the petition to secrecy in the accompanying note might have been effectual. Now it must serve to convince you. It is sufficiently explanatory. When Zeluca put it into my hand, I exonerated Arabella Weld directly; for such is the mischief of these vile slanders, Zeluca and I had previously *determined* on that poor girl's guilt." Wolsey extended his hand for the note, and read:—

"O! my dear Zeluca, I tremble to think of the desperation that dictated mine and your mother's letter. Her delicacy—all her feelings of propriety

“ must be shocked indeed ; and but for
“ my knowledge of her feelings in such a
“ case, I should scarcely venture to send
“ a letter, that I trust it will be her object
“ to commit to the flames *herself*, that she
“ may *know* no ill use can be made of
“ it. If—— but the secret *I hope* is be-
“ tween us, and I will not glance at
“ Wolsey’s detection of the impotent
“ scheme. By what fatality is it that re-
“ venge clouds the understanding as well
“ as the heart ? You will, surely you will
“ burn the letters Zeluca ? Yet such is
“ my doubt and dismay, I shall follow to
“ enforce my petition to *Mrs. Delvayne*.

MARIANNE BESSALY.”

“ Astonishing ! Preposterous !” ex-
claimed Wolsey ; for no doubt could
remain, unless it had turned on Marianne’s
accusers ; and independent of the inimi-
table acting of Mrs. Delvayne, and the
imposing air of rectitude and *lenient* su-
periority that bid defiance to suspicion,

it was not perhaps in nature for the most dispassionate inquisitor to have imputed to any complicated snare the coincidence that had fortuitously resulted from ZelUCA's committing herself to Marianne by the precipitate demand of her letter. Wolsey saw it delivered before him, and he read the accompanying note again and again, with the re-repeated *wonder* that signified curiosity rather than doubt. "If Marianne has such a spice of the Devil at the bottom of such outward and visible signs of the angel," said he, "she is not a fool. True; 'revenge clouds the understanding as well as the heart!' and he rose, and walked to the window, but not before ZelUCA had observed the sudden glow that flushed his face.

"Oh, God!" she thought, "I have transferred a talisman from my own to Marianne's power;" and she again demurred on *claiming* the devolved *opprobrium*—but the *reduplicated* falsification

she felt beyond the most capacious self-love to follow up with *self-devotion*; and had no alternative but to suffer Marianne to elicit, with his *disapprobation*, the gratitude of his gratified vanity.

Mrs. Delvayne had foreseen the evil; and knew Zuluca's susceptibility to it, and had a choice been in power, she would have rejected the path she had adopted: as it was, nothing remained but to invalidate the good that accompanied the the odium she had brought on Marianne. She gave Zuluca an encouraging look, and turning to Wolsey, said "It is but fair, however, that I endeavour to place Marianne's conduct in as favourable a light as it appears to me. I do acquit her of that gross revolting passion that leads a woman to break through the boundaries nature and custom have imposed on her; a very peculiar calmness of temper precludes her, I believe, from understanding the passion of love; jea-

lousy she certainly felt—the jealousy of *prudence*, which is less gross to a delicate man, than that of passion.”

“By my soul!” cried Wolsey, scarcely comprehending Mrs. Delvayne, and not all understanding, how any thing but love should have impelled to such a daring manœuvre. “By my soul, I can’t tell what she did feel or *aim at*!”

“Why, when in *your* verses, as she thought them, she found *her* praise *only* secondary to Miss Emcotts; it was, we *all* think, *natural* she should feel herself in effect *first preferred*, though not selected. To effect your rejection, therefore, by Miss Emcotts, was a rational plan, and *through* Zeluca you will admit *her best* object, if not a good one, Zeluca would never have exposed, and probably never have suspected her: you would soon have discovered it, *no gentleman*, trust me; and she would have been *secure*, if not successful.”

"But the letter did not allude to Miss Emcotts," said Wolsey, turning from the embarrassment he knew he must raise in Zeluca.

"She reduces me to a most indelicate openness, I am sure," said Mrs. Delvayne. "The charges in the letter equally effect any girl meditating on marriage with you—must I speak out. Has not some slight attention from you to Zeluca rendered her an *eligible* object to address slanders to, that would weigh equally with Miss Emcotts; and save Marianne from the suspicion that might have followed on an open warning to her? Marianne too," pursued Mrs. Delvayne, "knowing Zeluca's hasty temper might fairly judge the letter would have had brisk circulation in her hands; we all know Zeluca would not like to be exhibited as Miss Emcotts' inferior; and, in the moment of wrath, would be the most likely person in the world to give publicity to any thing

disadvantageous of her *panegyrist*. So far, I must blame her; her impetuosity, she now sees, makes her the tool of those, who, perhaps, bear in mind that they have sometimes been sufferers by it. However," concluded Mrs. Delvayne, seeing, by Wolsey's countenance, she had imputed just as much anger towards him in Zeluca as raised her in his favour. "I continue to say, I don't like still life—there is always something wrong in close premeditating girls."

"Oh! mamma, she has retracted," cried Zeluca; "and surely there the matter dies." Wolsey took a seat by her, with every token of soothing her disturbance.

"It does," said he, "rest as secure of the secret, as if your misconception of the author had not unintentionally put it in my possession. I pledge you my honour, your cousin shall never, through me, know you have unintentionally betrayed her confidence."

Zeluca looked her thanks, and Mrs.

Delvayne said, "I thank you too, Mr. Wolsey; for I understand you promise not to commit the secret to *any* one. I make this a point, because I think Marianne, at least, as pitiable as guilty; consider the *management* that has been beat into her—consider from what a dull abode marriage would take her—from what constraint—what penurious economy—and think how natural that she should seize on the hopes of a preference to endeavour to defeat a girl I think no man can love. My idea is, she thought so transcendent a hope for settling herself not to be passed by—she has no likings—no preferences; but above all, she has *elicited* none to *any purpose*; for Cassenberd's fits of flirtation will not, I doubt, turn to account, while she sees," pursued Mrs. Delvayne, glancing at Zeluca, "*cotemporaries*, turning disdainfully from the most splendid opportunities. It matters not *why*, from what romantic feelings; it *equally* raises her despair, and adds most forcibly

to a desire of settling advantageously—but I need not betray the foibles of my sex; it is enough to say poor thing, that there are a thousand extenuations for her impatience, and that I shall give her a lecture, and have done with the business.”

“Then, do have done with it, mamma!” cried Zeluca, entreatingly, anxious her mother should stop, judiciously at the moment of raising *disgust* in Wolsey.

“I will, my dear, and go and commit the letters to the flames, that they may, at least, never again commit her.”

Wolsey saw Mrs. Delvayne take her departure with rapture. Zeluca’s languor, her tenderness, and her vivid feelings, even in barely recovered life, formed a most touching contrast to the picture Mrs. Delvayne had just drawn of Marianne; and in the enthusiasm of approving love, he made an explicit tender of his heart, his hand, and fortune. Zeluca burst into tears, and hid her face in his bosom, with a confession, that she

was, the happiest being in existence ; and, in truth, for a short hour she was—the restless agony of her arduous undertaking was converted into the sudden delight of full unequivocal, irrevocable success ; and her countenance, formed by nature to exhibit the influence of the most attractive feelings, shone with the unparticipated enthusiasm, that, in such a moment, must possess the heart of youth, not wholly vitiated and corrupt. And it was only when the sound of the dinner-bell roused Wolsey from their mutual absorption, that his departure made her feel that *happiness* does not attend *success*, when ‘ Amidst the roses fierce repentance rears his snaky crest.’ Even the idea that it would be impossible to do away Wolsey’s sense of some *strong taint* of love in Marianne’s imputed enormity was no less harassing than the reproaches of her conscience, on sullyng the spotless integrity of the disinterested girl, whose actual solicitude for her had afforded means of

rendering the slander effectual; and her baseness and her fears of a *still frustrated* union, sullied her feverish exultation. Yet as little prone to admit scope for self-condemnation, as to tolerate blame from another, she fabricated her own apology, by representing her mother as culpable in not *absolutely* forbidding her plan—blaming the *teasing* persuasion against it as *confirming* her dubious purpose; and she, at last, fixed on Wolsey himself as chief culprit. She justly charged him with an equivocal reception of the imputed verses, to *try her feelings*; and so devolved on him the guilt of the letter, which would never have been produced, if he had been explicit in the first instance. But she could not devolve on him the irksome feelings that tarnished all the pleasure of her achieved conquest. Anticipated jealousy, and dread of detection before her purpose was completed, wholly perverted that enchanting complacency, which, in the actual hour of

realized expectation and love, Mrs. Delvayne trusted to see, as her only recompense for the arduous undertaking she had carried through. But when she presented her hand with the ardent ejaculation, "Oh! my beloved girl, we are at last blessed!"

Zeluca answered, "Pray proportion your congratulatory shake to the energy of my happiness, and then I can well bare it, though I have not got rid of my faintness."

Mrs. Delvayne's countenance exhibited the most disappointed surprize. "I met Wolsey," said she, "as he went out, and he extended his hand to me, with an air so significant, so hurried, and so happy, that though he said not a word, I made up my mind—Well my love——"

Zeluca interrupted her. "Oh, yes, it is a better, 'Well my love,'—then you are going to suggest; he *has made up his mind* too; he does think me above Sir John Dawlish's pretensions, but where is the consequent happiness? When His

first disgust wears off he will see nothing but *love* in the writer of that letter; oh! if you had reminded me of that."

"My love, did I not endeavour, by every argument, to restrain you from shewing the letter? You only determined on *fixing it on Marianne*, after he appeared so deeply to *feel her* praise; and as it turned out, then there was no resource left; he was determined to find the author, and Valcrest must have——"

"Oh! don't apologize for not making him fight with Valcrest," interrupted Zeluca.

Mrs. Delvayne always passed by Zeluca's retorts and sarcasms, if no evil to herself was comprehended in them; she therefore sought to console her by saying, Wolsey expressed such disgust at *such* love, that, for her own part, if any little latent preference to Marianne had existed, she thought it must be extirpated: and seeing the suggestion agreeable, she added,

to do away all remaining solicitude—
“ And it can never *hurt* her ; it is a secret among us.”

“ Hurt *her* !” exclaimed Zeluca, indignant at her mother’s looking to another than herself. “ Will it hurt *me* by and bye, when his conceit is flattered by her *love*—and she takes good care he shall never see any *violence* ?”

“ At any symptoms of that kind throw her off,” said Mrs. Delvayne. “ The *world* has nothing to do with our treatment of poor relations ; and Wolsey’s high sense of honour and *friendship* may be answered, by alledging *the letter*.”

“ But I don’t like to throw her off. I am not one of those *cold hearted people*, who have no *preferences*.”

Mrs. Delvayne coloured, but she did not utter her resentment ; and Zeluca, little observing of *her* countenance, proceeded, “ There is not another girl in the whole creation, that, as a married woman,

I would permit in my house a week ; and it is only to one of my own age, I could be communicative without pain."

"I am sorry for that, my dear," answered Mrs. Delvayne, with a sigh.

A long pause succeeded, which Zeluca broke, by saying "She has not followed her note though—so I shall send to bid her keep away, for I don't want to give a circumstantial account. I shall say you are ill, and I can't leave you, to have any confidential chat with her."

Mrs. Delvayne did not break her silence, but when she saw Zeluca writing, solicitude for her overcame pique and resentment ; and she reminded her it would be prudent to ask Marianne to come early on the morrow, that she might state the new turn in affairs, and prepare her to pass off any little alteration in Wolsey's deportment *to her*, as the consequence of pre-occupation ; "and I too, my love, will get *your written request* for

the letter, that produced *her note*," concluded Mrs. Delvayne.

"O, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive."

Zeluca might have said—she did say—flinging down her pen. "Lord! what torments do arise to do away my pleasures always;—how Wolsey must be struck when she congratulates him in her *quiet way*."

"Not at all, my dear girl. You must make a point to let him know you would not, on any account, pain her, by letting her guess he had seen the letter; and he has so much honor and feeling he will fully enter into that nicety, and will be more struck with her *art* in making her compliments. Nothing is so easy as to make him think her artful; the prejudice is, invariably, that *calm* people are *cunning*, and *violent* ones *ingenuous*."

"And if she is not artful," said Zeluca,

"I am sure I don't know who is; for she never commits herself in any way."

Zeluca's fondness for Marianne, (for so she characterized the pleasure she derived from her society) always rendered Mrs. Delvayne alert in embracing an opportunity to issue an indirect warning against the intimacy. Indeed all the sincerity and fidelity of Marianne could not open Mrs. Delvayne's eyes to the purity that recoiled from meanness or deceit in its most modified plausibility. She justly thought Marianne had those powers of dissimulation in which Zeluca failed—great self-command, habitual forbearance, and all the *enduring* qualities, that were exemplified in the peace and ease with which she submitted to deprivations amidst the surrounding enjoyment of youth and prosperity; and as she could not give credit to an integrity of *heart and mind*, so entirely the reverse of what she had rendered Zeluca's; a *disdain of self-benefit*, by *collusive* means, never entered into her ac-

count. It was, therefore, without belying her opinion, Mrs. Delvayne answered Zeluca, " We shall see when Marianne's *apathy* has a jog, if she does not put in practice the most refined intrigue. I don't know what man I would trust to her powers of seduction; or what woman would escape being her dupe; with that *saraphic smile* of her's, as Cassenberd calls it. No; I should have no scruple of conscience in pronouncing her exceedingly artful; and her note was so well turned, and every thing chimes in so well, no embarrassment need adulterate your grace and vivacity. Half-an-hour to morrow morning will serve to deceive her effectually; and in the evening, you will be repaid in *undeceiving* Miss Emcotts."

Zeluca's face brightened. " Well," cried she, " her friend and passer may rejoice; her scramble for Wolsey has been a good thousand a-year to Mrs. Serle. O, that I had her guineas," pursued she, her

face clouding over. "Detestable creature, with her whity brown hair, polished down, as if that attainable deformity of fashion would stand in place of all beauty; but I dare say, at last, she will get Wolsey!"

"My dear girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Delvayne.

"Why?" returned Zeluca. "You forget what an explanation there is to be made; and that I shall not have half the fortune I was given out for."

"Oh, leave that to me, my love," returned Mrs. Delvayne, carefully hiding her internal uneasiness.

"Yes; and Wolsey would leave it to you; and so, perhaps, would *Old Mumpsimus*—but what will *Lady Naglefort* say? Will she leave to *your* choice, the fair opportunity of stigmatizing such extravagance, such incorrectness? No; she will find out that I am unfit for a wife; and it will do me no good that you should come in for *your share* of blame."

"You shall be exculpated," said Mrs.

Delvayne, "let what will betide me; it is with Sir Peregrine, not Lady Naglefort, I shall discuss money matters; and all shall be settled before she interferes: make yourself easy, my dear girl, I am in no apprehension about the result." But Zeluca was; and though she was occasionally forced into conversation, the perpetual jogging of her foot convinced Mrs. Delvayne her deep reflection arose from an anxiety it was wiser to permit to die away of itself, than to attempt to disperse.

CHAP. III.

"Whoever shall review his Life, will generally find that the whole tenor of his conduct has been determined by some accident of no apparent moment."—DR. JOHNSON.

THOUGH Wolsey quitted Spire in the happiest state of feeling, yet the sight of Erdestone, as he reached the park gate, gave a sudden turn to his pleasurable sensations; but he checked the spontaneous impulse to avoid him, and jumping off his

horse, sent his servant forward, while, without preface or preamble, he made an abrupt ~~disclosure of the result~~ of his morning's visit to Spire.

Erdestone stopped short ; but retracting a reply of poignant censure, resumed his interrupted walk, and said temperately—
 “ Well ; you stopped away from Spire on Tuesday in compliance with Lady Naglefort's entreaties to proceed *warily at least* ; and what should she expect but a *lover's performance* of a lover's promise.” Wolsey was shocked by his friend's *ill-suppressed* disapprobation ; but he was the more inclined to declare himself the champion of Zeluca ; and he said in few, but comprehensive words, that the supposed election of Miss Emcotts in the verses, Zeluca, like every body else, had attributed to him, had elicited proofs of regard that could be neither feigned or superficial ; consequently, though he had not been tardy, he had kept his promise by proceeding on *sure grounds*.

"Oh, I can conceive," returned Erdestone, "that earthquakes and tornados are secondary convulsions of nature compared to the hurricane of her feelings."

"By Heaven! you never in your life was so mistaken," retorted Wolsey. "Whatever were Zelucia's feelings, they were exhibited in a temporary suspension of animation, for which I can vouch; for I held her the very image of death, and witnessed all the gentle languor of succeeding recovery, while opposed to susceptibility so powerful, yet delicate. I can bring you a proof of vindictive disappointment." Wolsey, suddenly stopped; he recollected it was for *him* Marianne had outraged the calm dignity of her nature; whatever was the impulse—that she was *self-corrected* in the note that abjured the futile calumny; and that, above all, his honour was pledged *never* to commit her. Erdestone, therefore, though *his* friend could be no exception to the falseness of his exposing

her, and he looked at him dubious by what subterfuge to appease his raised curiosity. But Erdestone exhibited none; for he considered that Wolsey was resorting to subterfuge to exalt Zeluca; consequently, the sentence on Marianne, which he neither bewildered by passion nor misled by vanity, would have demanded better authority to justify than that which had been effectual with Wolsey was withheld, and Zeluca's imposture *undetected*.

Erdestone, after some minutes reflection, resumed—"The minutiae which has combined to rivet your captivity is unimportant—the fact is clear; some lines in which you had neither influence or share—some lines sent forth by a fortune-hunter to inveigle an heiress, have had the effect of fixing your lot for life."

"You are invariably uncandid!" cried Wolsey, "where Zeluca is concerned. With all her unguardedness she has too much modesty to have betrayed the extent of her tenderness *unalarmed*; and it would

not have been revealed to me from those lines if——” Again Wolsey’s sudden recollection suppressed the letter, and he resumed—“Well, if it is as you say, is not every man’s destiny liable to be fixed by accidental occurrences in which he has no part, and over which he has no controul?”

“Be it so,” said Erdestone—“it is certain then?”

“Yes,” Wolsey answered, in some trepidation; “and it is to your friendship——” Erdestone stopped him. “You have not forgotten that you yourself have admitted Zeluca ought to have a very *discreet forbearing* husband.”

“I have said great indulgence has rendered her sensitive and tenacious,” answered Wolsey; “but where the head and heart is good, the foibles of temper are unworthy mention.”

“It is irrevocably certain then,” was Erdestone’s laconic reply. Wolsey signified an affirmative, and then proceeded to ask

him to break it to Sir Peregrine and Lady Naglefort. He believed his uncle would be sorry Zeluca had only £10,000; but with Mrs. Delvayne's very old family, and her education, he would readily admit it not an unexceptionable match; with Lady Naglefort he owned it would be harder to prevail; because an early prejudice against, had grown into personal dislike of Zeluca. Erdestone was too much grieved both at the match and the disapprobation it would excite, not to state all the disadvantages to Wolsey; he represented that Lady Naglefort would, undoubtedly, exert her influence with her husband to induce him to withhold assent; consequently"—but Wolsey stopped him; "he said his honour was pledged, and secession was impossible, though beggary was to be the consequence: so that if his uncle continued inexorable, and Zeluca chose to participate his lot, he must *rely* on his *profession*, and pursue it in a different spirit to what he had done. But he required Erdestone to postpone

his deputed task till he had consulted Mrs. Delvayne ; and having finally agreed on that determination, they separated, previous to meeting a dinner party of men, at which Wolsey, by the aid of the bottle, enabled himself to lose sight of Lady Naglefort's anticipated disappointment and displeasure. He was at Spire early the next morning, and the remaining paleness of Zeluca, which arose from a sleepless night, rendered her so interesting, that she had little difficulty in keeping him from seeking her mother ; and every opportunity for preparing him to understand it would be death to her, if Marianne should fancy her letter had *been seen*. Wolsey, all tenderness and approbation, praised, and soothed, and promised, and internally felt what he asserted, that he could sooner die than disoblige her. And his intended conference with Mrs. Delvayne, seemed in danger of being passed over altogether, when Marianne suddenly entered, and at the sight of him drew back, with a suf-

fusion, so complete and universal, that Wolsey's conviction was closed to the admission of any after doubts, for which he would otherwise have been on the watch. But an undefinable sensation prevented his keeping his promise of behaving as *usual*; so, starting up, he asked Zeluca to send to know if her mother was in her dressing-room, and followed the servant who brought an answer in the affirmative. His behaviour passed wholly unnoticed by Marianne, the sight of him at all, and under the obvious symptoms of *reciprocal ingratitude*, where she expected all that might have been looked for from the *vindictive animosity* of the *reclaimed letter*, excited her surprize, and rendered her a listener too much engrossed to glance at his behaviour to herself. She heard that Medlicott was the author of the verses—that Wolsey was a *professed* admirer of Zeluca's; and she heard it, under whatever additions and alterations Zeluca

chose to convey the information; but her astonishment was irrepressible at the letter having been seen by Wolsey. Yet she did not doubt, for one moment, nor did she wish to *reel* the *astonishment* that involuntarily escaped her; she rather thought it a favourable opening, to entreat ZelUCA never to call it to his recollection by any after excesses of the same kind; and then congratulated her on the fervent love, that could alone have induced him to overlook it. ZelUCA, seeing her utter freedom from suspicion, imbibed with a kind of contempt for her credulity, a feeling of reconciliation, the *injured* never excite, but when *security* from *detection* separates *inflicted evil* from *hatred*. She secretly wondered how she could have been in dread of what was so easily overcome; her exultation lost all mixture of depression and of repugnance to Mari- anne, and she insisted on her staying to accompany them to Mrs. Serle's. Mari- anne assured her of her willing acquies-

cence had it been possible ; but, in truth, a very unexpected letter from her grandfather the day before, had created so much consultation at home, that she could not alledge a wish to follow her note to Spire, as she promised ; and she told Zeluca that they were sure to have farther news by the next morning's post, that her mother would not at all be able to account for her being absent. Zeluca, determined to have a spectator of her power over Wolsey, in one who had been witness of her many humiliations in attaining it, still insisted she should go to Mrs. Serle's ; and as Marianne was so peremptorily in not sleeping out, she was to be set down at Cewerby in the evening. Zeluca, by expectations on the *motive* of Mrs. Serle's invitation, shewed that her pleasure in the visit was to retaliate a triumph ; and enjoy Miss Emcotts' reception of a tribute from a poor fortune hunter, when she *thought* she had *hooked* Wolsey ; and Marianne could not but wonder that, in

such an hour of decisive happiness, the paltry solicitude should interfere; or that the verses, or the real *heroines* of them, could be of the least consequence. But in spite of her *insouciance*, Zeluca analysed minutely the composition she ridiculed; nor stopped to take breath, till she paused for Marianne's assent, to her's being the meed of *admiration*, Miss Emcotts of praise. Gratified in that, she became as eager to do away the sense of exaltation she thought Marianne might derive from bringing up the list, (with the exception of Miss Emcotts) and she accordingly said, "Now don't scorn your three *laudatory lines in the lump*, as equivalent to neglect—don't go, and say, he proved how nearly he forgot you by *squeezing* you in at the last: *last* you are, and I have insisted on Wolsey claiming the palm for you therefore; and I entreat you not to begin convincing Wolsey no compliment was meant." Marianne forced a smile, and signified acquiescence, but she

had no opportunity to establish or disclaim her right to celebrity with Wolsey ; when he entered, Mrs. Delvayne came in with him, and beckoned her out of the room ; and with very natural eagerness, made known her maternal satisfaction. She asked for Zeluca's note of the previous day, and reading it over, made some laughing comments on the quick sensibility, ending with praises of the ingenuousness with which she had told the whole to Wolsey. Mrs. Delvayne was aware that if any thing was unexplained, conjecture would be busy and troublesome ; she, therefore, intimated that the honour and rectitude that had urged Zeluca to a voluntary confession of her indiscretion, lest innocence should be implicated, had had greater weight with Wolsey, than the compliment comprised in her indignation at his supposed preference of another ; but she said he wished the letters burnt, and all mention of them dropped, lest envy or ill nature should

confine a mischievous story out of them; and then making a transition to dress her *tete-a-tete* with Marianne, lasted till *dinner dismissed* Wolsey from *his*. Wolsey had promised to attend his aunt to Mrs. Sterle's, and he departed to keep his promise, and arrived with her, prepared according to Zeluca's injunctions, to abstain from all tokens of the *perfect understanding* the *morning's conversation* had produced. But to whatever restraint he felt himself bound to limit his inclination, Zeluca had not forbearance to refrain from *exhibiting* him her *captive*; and Lady Naglefort, at one moment struck by seeing a *tete-a-tete* dialogue with Wolsey the *reason why* Miss Delwayne's summons to the piano was disregarded, and the next alarmed at observing Wolsey's *interference*, prevented her taking a part to which *she* was *willing*, hailed the tardy appearance of Erdestone, with a request *he* would petition her to play. *His petitions* she thought

were never rejected, while she believed that, to a love like Wolsey's, some casual intervention might convert the dreaded proposal of an union *for life* into a disdain of all intercourse; a disdain, however fluctuating, always calculated to give her hopes of a final renunciation. To Erdestone's request to her to sing Zeluca returned a negative, that shewed she defied his interference with his friend; but Lady Naglefort had no clue to guide her to the grounds of such firm security, and was only grateful, that though she did not sing she was called from her ominous dilaogue with Wolsey; and Zeluca herself seemed to feel the request a hint to torture Miss Emcotts, of which she had lost sight. "Mr. Erdestone," she resumed, "Miss Emcotts has so put me out of tune, by disappointing me of her musical *friend*, that I question if I sing a note in this *county* again; moreover, no earthly thing delights me now but verses. Oh!" cried she, looking from Miss Em-

cotts to Wolsey, " if ever you *should take it* into your *head* to wish to win me, and wear me ; write me a sonnet, and I am your's!"

Miss Emcotts looked as if nothing should make her forget to smile, and said—" Request I make to you, for all goodness you are, do not allude to those verses ; at my notoriety in them uneasy Mrs. Serle is."

" Mrs. Serle thinks, I suppose," said Erdestone :—

" She that with poetry is won,
Is but a desk to write upon ;
And what men sing of her, they mean
No more than on the thing they lean."

" What good poetry, Mr. Erdestone," cried Zeluca, " if the verses are *good*, surely we may be pleased with praise, though in *poetry* ? I assure you I was wicked enough to poke them into the fire, when I saw some of my particular friends abused ; but Miss Emcotts con-

vinced me, satire is the weapon of the moralist, and that these verses are really good !”

The blank dispirited silence of Miss Emcotts fully proved what Zeluca's significant tone implied, that her own words were quoted on her and Wolsley, bending forward to catch Medlicott's eye, exclaimed, “ Did ever man wear his laurels so humbly—tongue tied—lost—modesty-struck, even beyond the symptomatic marks of *true genius* ! Why, man, consider that this crown of bays is but the *precursor* of highest honours and triumphs,” and he glanced slily at Miss Emcotts.

Medlicott too, glanced slily at her, and observed, that however gratified by her panegyric, she was dispirited at her panegyrist ; and feeling he had still his way to make, he endeavoured to avoid the disadvantage of a *professed* lover, by seriously and explicitly denying the verses. And when he saw that the General and

Mrs. Serle were too much engrossed with their billiards, and betting, to keep a prying watch over every word that escaped him, his fluency returned, "I," cried he to Wolsey, "have never before been charged with such an approach to poetry, as a *rhyme*, you indubitably would have been a poet if you had been *poor*;—by the Lord, I wish I had the talent;—I know of a most inimitable opening for a man of genius. Lady Mynyer has just lost the head of her establishment, she never even *travels* without her cook, two Italians (*pages de chambre*), an atheist, and a poet; and she has just lost her bard; he was exquisite in touching off a pathetic sonnet or monody, and had his pen a long time in preparation for her father's lingering death. As the physicians could do the poor old man no more good they recommended his being brought down to Markwell Park; and all the family admitted that the herse, and cavalcade, moving slowly on, when the intervals in the fo-

liage opened a vista, would be fine!—well worth the bringing the invalid to the family vault *before* he died instead of *after*. And when the effect was effected, the monody made the most of it, I assure you.

“What glimpse of funeral state my eye
salutes :

The plumed herse—the cavalcade—the mutes ;
Oh ! filial——

I forget the lines, but as they proceed, they break out into inimitable beauty. Lady Mynyer owned she would not but have had the scene laid at the park for a thousand guineas !”

“Oh, for shame !” generally uttered, induced Medlicott to reply, “Upon my soul it’s true, I won’t swear for transplanting old Markwell from town to country, at the *crisis* of his disorder ; that would be too *moving* a death for our feelings ; but, for a week before he went off, his *last sett out*, and the right window,

to catch the view was the only topic. But his biographer did not survive him six months. Lady Mynyer was so fond of moon-light scenes, he could not stand plunging into mid-night dews from the pestilential heat of crowded rooms;—he died of an inward complaint.”

“ Her ladyship should have added an apothecary to her establishment,” said Wolsey.

“ She did all that was possible for him, my dear sir,” returned Medlicott.” “ She sent for his mother to nurse him; and as it was decidedly a surgical case, she sent for one of our very *best practitioners*. The poor woman followed the operator out of the room after he had examined the invalid, but he did not allow her to put any interrogatories. ‘ I wish to open your son,’ said he: ‘ you can have no objection—so let me know directly he goes off.’”

Erdestone had no inclination to give further attention to Medlicott, whom he suffered to proceed, while he took a seat

by Marianne. "I should not wonder," said he, "if the majority of this little party were, from one cause or other, disposed to be *grave* rather than *gay*; but you, in your *reverie*, have forgotten to *assume mirth*. As you never wrap yourself up to be drawn out I must put down *your* deep reflection to the momentous post of *yesterday*:—

—————"That messenger of grief,
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy of some!"

"Our herald must, henceforward, rank as *Hymen's* high priest."

Marianne's cheeks crimsoned with shame, and indeed indignation, at Wolsey's communicating the anonymous letter he had at once vanity to *overlook* and to *proclaim*. It was, however, too disgraceful in her ideas for any extenuation to occur; and hesitating, she repeated, "Yesterday—yesterday—I was not at Spire."

"But you are there now," resumed Erdestone, intently observing her.

"No; I go home from thence to-night; and this morning I was almost wholly with Mrs. Delvayne—not half-an-hour with Zeluca; and I scarcely spoke to Mr. Wolsey."

"Still there was time," observed Erdestone, "to learn that a marriage is the result of this 'New Alma,' so liberally distributed, per post, though it does not take place in the quarter one might have predicted. You *had* a copy yesterday."

"Oh! the verses—oh, yes, the day before at least; I did not know to what you alluded."

"True, the day before; yesterday was *settling* day," said Erdestone; "but, in this stage of the business, *my* mistake of the *day* cannot be important, I think—can it?"

The moment Marianne became sensible he did not allude to *Zelucia's* letter: she was also sensible of the singularity of

her embarrassment in his eyes ; his observation of it was indeed so apparent, that she felt some explanation necessary ; but as none presented itself short of stating the misconception he had led her into, she hoped he would understand her to make an apology for a *jumble* of *distinct* occurrences, by telling him she had left her mother in a good deal of anxiety about the illness of a relation the *post* of *yesterday* had informed her of.

Erdestone saw, at least, that she wished so to account for her perplexity and hesitation ; and he gave her the satisfaction of falling in with her purpose ; he asked if the illness was in the Dean of Avonpont's family ; and an affirmative affording an opportunity for further questions, he made many enquiries about her grandfather, yet with an air so friendly, and without a shade of impertinence, that they fell into a long and social conversation : for Marianne no longer feared she was annoying or discomposing Zeluca. But in

that she was mistaken, as soon as Zelúca had made Miss Emcotts feel *all* the unpleasant results of misappropriating Wolsey, she was herself at leasure to feel latent disturbance at Marianne's assimilating cordiality with one so much above Wolsey, that only for want of knowing herself, did she believe, had it been in her *power*, she could have resisted the temptation of casting off her affianced husband, for his more exalted friend. And even, while looking at the sparkling vivacious beauty of Wolsey, she so much preferred to the sedate, thoughtful cast of Erdestone's countenance, she felt half impelled to wish to recal a *right* to effectual competition for smiles, that bestowed, however accidentally on another, raised her ambition to appropriate. That ambition, however, she recollected modern systems did not interdict in marriage; and she was not of a disposition to sink it at that interval before marriage,

when the ~~em~~passioned assiduities of a betrothed lover are engrossing with the most determined votaries of admiration. Habit, combined with nature, and couching her latent purpose under the carelessness of frolic, she whispered Miss Emcotts that they would *inspire* Erdestone; and then asked him to join in a trio. He stole a glance at Wolsey, and alledged the fact, that he was too hoarse to be barely intelligible in speaking; but he drew from his pocket a manuscript air, composed by a friend in Switzerland, that he had that morning *accidentally* lighted on, though he had often before ineffectually searched for it. Zeluca eagerly seized it, and joined with Miss Emcotts in deciphering the minute transcript, calling for Wolsey's *aid* to *mar* their efforts, lest he should perceive, and resent her desire to move Erdestone from his station.

Erdestone met Marianne's eye, as he

withdrew his own from Zeluca. "Do you think our friends will claim the flitch of bacon?" said he.

The question, so abruptly put, would have raised a smile, had the objects of it been indifferent, as it was Marianne answered, "I hope so"—with eyes filling with tears, and a sigh Erdestone echoed.

"To speculate on the suitability of marriages," said he, "is, I believe, rather agreeable than profitable, but with me, and I suppose with every body, the bias is habitual. There are many maxims laid down by the vulgar and the wise on the eligibility of contrasts, or consonances in mind and temper, but I have not been able to make up my own opinion to the adoption of any criterion."

"No," said Marianne; "how is it possible; perhaps, coincidences in disposition and principles are the source of that happy congeniality, observers, from want of perfect insight, put down to an obvious dissimilarity in temper."

“True; a certain conformity in the qualities of the heart and mind must be necessary to ensue perfect sympathy; and where this coalition exists, perhaps, *temper* matter not.”

“Unless,” said Marianne, “two *very* impetuous tempers come together.”

“And surely then,” observed Erdestone, “though there may be an occasional clash, yet no radical disaffection will arise where the morals are equally pure on both sides, and the disposition equally good and generous; I do not hold there to be any attaching power in a *contrast* in temper.”

“Now, do, Marianne, remember,” cried Zeluca, “Mr. Erdestone is not quite so anti-harmonic as yourself; let him hear if he wishes to hear.” Marianne closed her lips, and smiled obedience; but Erdestone did not quit her side, nor did he hear, though he was silent—he was calling to mind Marianne’s first confusion at his allusion to Zeluca’s marriage, and put

ting in practice his penetration, by endeavouring to discover if a life more isolated and unembellished than he had thought it possible youth and beauty could endure with sweet and chearful ease, and immoveable integrity, was to be wholly embittered by the cruelty of disappointed love. Marianne was equally disposed to reflection, the ardour for engrossing attention, unabated in Zeluca, in the actual event of an engagement, where she professed her affections to centre, augured, she thought, but ill for matrimonial happiness. It was true that Marianne had retracted her idea of any preference in Erdestone, beyond superficial approbation of Zeluca's powers of pleasing; and had no apprehension that her virtue, in the general acception of the word, would be at all implicated in her aim at ingratiating herself in his favour; but that that desire existed on the eve of marriage she thought denoted the engrossing self-love but little compatible with the

power of making even the slightest sacrifice to a husband's happiness or wishes. From sentiments that often dropped from Wolsey, she thought he had himself been aware his own hastiness chimed in but ill with Zeluca's irritability, and that he felt a want of something endearing in the high spirited vivacity, that so often outstripped his own. Whether the same idea occurred to Erdestone she knew not, but she was sure he alluded to the intended union, with such undoubted anxiety for his friend's happiness, as proved he would be a vigilant observer of Zeluca; and Zeluca called her to order, just as she was on the point of hinting at a *quickness* in her, grown through indulgence into vehemence, that *surprise* might not be added to the disapprobation she well knew her domestic despotism must excite. Marianne's reflective cast of disposition, and mode of life, together with her strong understanding, had enabled her to derive from books materials wherewith to

convert society into an useful and agreeable source of interest at home as well as abroad. To read, in order to store the memory with chronological facts, is a task—to get rid of a few tedious hours in a day by books, is barely less fatiguing than idleness; but to imbibe new ideas, to draw deductions from, and make application of the moral researches of wisdom and reflection, is to derive from reading the enjoyment and occupation of a *pursuit*; and Marianne had not taken peculiar delight in the developement of the human mind, without having discovered failings in her cousin's disposition and morals, as well as temper, that would, perhaps, have prohibited affection, if she had not loved her before the discovery——, if immature experience of the extent of human frailty had not left her in absolute unsuspicion of her most heinous acts; and if she had not considered Mrs. Delvayne accountable for the perversion of the some of the finest qualities of the human

mind. But circumstances that weighed with her she knew would be nugatory with Erdstone; and that from repugnance to his friends choice, he would be prone to reprobate rather than extenuate, where there was scope for doubt; and resolving to turn the conversation if he should again pertinaciously select Zeluca for his topic, she turned to see if the same significance marked his countenance. But though he had been inattentive to the prelude, inimitably as Zeluca had played it, yet, when she accompanied the air with her voice, a striking change in his complexion denoted the revival of dormant interest, Zeluca caught the ejaculation that escaped him, and turned in conscious superiority, to ask if she had given it as she *should do*. It was evident that he suppressed more animated approbation in answering, "I know not such a first-sighted player!" but he could not overcome his desire for a repetition, and rose to beg her to indulge him. Zeluca's quick eye caught the

meaning glance Lady Naglefort directed to Wolsey; and she instantly called to mind that her ladyship, under pretence of watching her mother and the general at billiards, had been deriving from her conduct some hints for Wolsey—hints that she felt she might *disdain*, as she was aware of; she refused Erdestone's request, saying, she never obeyed an *encore*; and, in a whisper to Wolsey, charged him with not loving her well enough to assume the generalizing amiability that would avert suspicion. The whisper brought on another, and another, and each more low and more tender, and more calculated to confirm Lady Naglefort's alarms, who hailed the arrival of the carriage, with an alacrity that broke up the party, so evidently to *her satisfaction*, that Mrs. Serle felt herself called upon to apologize for the disappointment of the promised treat. "Mr. Pontcastle," said she, "would never have disappointed Miss Emcotts, I do assure you, had it not been a matter of neces-

sity. It was her father who brought him forward ; and though he is the finest player in London, he would give up any engagement at her request. But his wife is dying at Paris ; and he writes that he *delayed* the packet to give us information he was setting sail to join her."

Compliments, forced and not forced, all gave way to Medlicott's alert volubility. " I reckon," said he, " that there is not a more uncomfortable being on the terraqueous globe than Pontcastle (independent of his wife's perilous state, I mean to be understood) ; for I hold sea-sickness to be the bitterest of all mortal diseases, bating that I know a cure."

" What is it ?" was echoed around.

" Lay a diachylon plaister on the breast and lie down, and you'll suffer no more from the most tempestuous sea than I do now." And he maintained his assertion, in despite of incredulity and laughter, and with the corroboration of many anecdotes, Marianne did not stay to hear ;

for Wolsey accompanied Lady Naglefort home, and Mrs. Delvayne instantly took leave. Zeluca reminded her mother of the promise to set Marianne down at Cowerby, but did not add another sentence to the conversation Mrs. Delvayne kept up during the ride, with a very unusual flow of spirits.

CHAP. IV.

“ Il est des personnes à qui les traits échappent comme les saillies.—MADAME DE STAEL.

A LETTER from Dr. St. Orr, brought information that Mrs. St. Orr's slight stroke of the palsy had been followed by so serious an one, that she lay not only senseless and speechless, but deprived of the use of one side; and, as his first letter

had required the attendance of Mrs. Bessaly and Miss St. Orr, in the event of her encreasing disorder, they prepared to set out; and Jane, though uninvited, determined to accompany them. She did not say, that her purpose was to embrace so fair an opening, to induce the Dean to shew, at least, part of that attention that was due from a grandfather to an only grandchild, (to which she knew the courage of both her sisters were unequal); she merely promised Marianne she would be back in a week; and while packing was going forward, she made up her mind in what way to account for her intrusion into her father's house. Jane believed the specific invitation to her two sisters denoted her father's intuitive fear of her more exacting spirit; and that, she interpreted, inability to *resist demands* he stood too much in fear of Mrs. St. Orr's recovery to proffer; she was, therefore, resolved, if possible, to obtain for Marianne some of those minor advantages, her own

deprivations had taught her to feel *momentous*; and, before the age should arrive, when they would be comparatively immaterial; nor could the wonder of Mrs. Bessaly, nor the remonstrances of Ellinor effect a change in her purpose. Marianne's first impulse was to wonder and remonstrate too, but she recollected her aunt Jane could do nothing mean, and would do nothing unjust; and while she listened to the warm dialogue between her and Ellinor, she assisted her to pack, well knowing she would carry her point; and silently favouring it, because it was her's. Miss St. Orr, after having advanced many arguments, said, finally, that Jane was deficient in feeling and consideration, in leaving Marianne at home alone. Jane's satirical laugh was interrupted by Marianne's saying, she was ashamed to profess a hope her aunt would put her out of the question; because it admitted the possible idea, that she considered a week alone a *penance*; and thus Marianne's

cheerful acquiescence seemed definitive ; for Ellinor gave up the point by requiring Marianne to be minute in relating every circumstance, as she should feel herself very uneasy in thinking of her perfect solitude. The further injunctions of Mrs. Bessaly, and the inuendo's of Jane, were prevented by the sound of wheels, which produced a request to Marianne, to say that the chaise must wait half-an-hour. She stepped to the window, and reported the carriage to be Lady Naglefort's, and herself *in it, at that early* hour ; but, cordial as they were with her ladyship, they had no scruple in pleading the urgency of their departure, and Marianne was deputed to state the case to her. Marianne, as she felt none, made no pretension to affection for Mrs. St. Orr ; and the common feelings of humanity did not repress the alacrity with which she entered the room ; but apologies were suspended by surprize at Lady Naglefort's grave looks, and at the sight

of Mr. Erdestone with her, and conjectures on what might be the motive to a visit that seemed to bear something mysterious on the face of it, superseded by her ladyship's abrupt salutation. "Miss Bessaly, you will excuse my precipitation—I am too much interested for an exordium in form—are you in your cousin's confidence?"

Marianne's face was suffused with blushes; for Erdestone looked as steadily, though not so repulsively on her as Lady Naglefort; but she answered promptly, "What my cousin communicated to me, ma'am, was without any injunction to secrecy; nevertheless, I should not have mentioned her communications, but to those as well instructed as myself."

Lady Naglefort barely permitted the conclusion of her answer. "Can you seriously and truly say, you was not in the secret of her detained flight to Scotland this morning?"

"To Scotland!" repeated Marianne,

more shocked even than surprized. "Is it possible?"

Erdestone looked at Lady Naglefort, and she answered him. "I am convinced. My dear," she pursued to Marianne, "have you not then had a letter of explanation?—she might have left that. Have you heard nothing of her, or from her, or from Mrs. Delvayne?"

"Nothing," said Marianne, deeply grieved at Lady Naglefort's perturbation.

Lady Naglefort pursued. "The step then is absolutely adopted from defiance and insolence, unless it is a plan of her mother's to evade coming down with any thing."

"Oh, no!" cried Marianne. "I was alone with Mrs. Delvayne all yesterday morning, and the arrangements——" she stopped; but Erdestone turned to the window, and she resumed—"In fact, I know her happiness was so much wrapped up in being accessory to Zeluca's that——"

“ That,” said Lady Naglefort, “ a parading marriage, in the face of the neighbourhood, was what she *explained* or *betrayed* to be her object. But there is no arriving at a criterion by which to fathom the sincerity of such a woman as Mrs. Delvayne. She is all falseness: not that I would be understood to say she is so weak as to incur the reputation of a liar. No; she is mistress of all the arts requisite to convey a false impression; and therefore, unless the case is urgent, will never commit to the possibility of demonstration, the treachery, the falsification, and the hypocrisy, which constitutes the enormity of a *lie*. What she said to you, consequently, cannot be received even as a clue to her designs; and I suspect her, because, when Sir Peregrine called this morning, her *anger* led her to be *firm* in refusing to give her daughter a shilling! and that is a sort of firmness not to be accounted for in a

mother, whom I have never seen roused into anger, by acts more offensive to morality than this is to decorum. It leads one to suppose," she continued to Erdestone, "that the £20,000 is all a flourish!"

Marianne prevented Erdestone's answer by the promptitude with which she assured Lady Naglefort, her whole family knew Mrs. Delwayne's fortune to be what she stated, and that £10,000 was ZelUCA's destined portion on marrying; when Mrs. Delwayne always intended removing to a small cottage near Dr. St. Orr, which belonged to the present Mr. Delwayne, whose guardians yearly gave her the option of taking it. And then, impelled by the love of justice, natural to an uncorrupted heart, she timidly, but convincingly represented to Lady Naglefort, that a mother so indulgent as Mrs. Delwayne, must, in her first indignation, feel ZelUCA's a *wanton* act of disobedience, consequently betray anger *nothing* else would excite.

"If that is true, my dear," said her ladyship, "then the daughter's deeper condemnation results from the mother's exculpation: *wanton disregard* and *contempt* of a parent, is what I thought *Miss Delwayne* might have refrained from."

"But you will admit," returned Marianne, "it may appear *like*, and *not* be *wanton disregard*. *Zeluca* has been so used to surmount opposition, that it is natural she should shrink from it, when she finds her mother's power ineffectual to overcome it; and *you* know, Mr. Erdestone," said she, "that she could not feel a sanguine hope of making herself *agreeable* to Lady Naglefort. I mean not to defend her, but the dread of encountering coldness explains, that to be vivid feeling, which at first, appears an unfeeling act of audacity."

Erdestone gave Marianne his support, and also explained, that Wolsey himself must participate in her repugnance to encounter the displeasure he was

grieved to raise: so that the apparent defiance in both was to be explained timidity." Lady Naglefort shook her head contemptuously;—Marianne looked disturbed, but presently resumed. "This, I must say for ZelUCA, that I do not believe she feels herself treacherously stealing into the rank and consequence of which she is deemed unworthy. I do not believe she thinks your ladyship would object, but on the score of personal dislike; I know that Mrs. Delwayne considers her family, her education, and even her fortune, almost universally unexceptionable: so much so, that your *disapprobation* would not have amounted to *dissent*."

"If she was so explicit," observed Lady Naglefort, "I wonder more."

Marianne interrupted her. "I mean not to say she was thus explicit. I have not seen her confidentially for half-an-hour, since it was likely these circumstances should have come regularly forward; but this is the idea I have formed from

many minute occurrences and sentiments, that have become apparent in the warmth and eagerness of communication, and therefore, surely just."

Lady Naglefort mused, and then said, "At any rate, my dear, an apology is due to you for obtruding this business. I am afraid, angrily, on you, I confess, under the idea that you was an accomplice."

"Indeed!" said Marianne—"I cannot challenge a circumstance giving hint of the plan stronger, than Zeluca's taciturnity in our way home last night."

"It only surprized me," observed Erdestone, "that Lady Naglefort should see any motive for including you in a step you could not forward, and might have impeded; and the evil of it I do not see, for the marriage must have taken place; the objections turn on points not admitting *absolute interdiction*."

"Indeed!" said Lady Naglefort, with quickness,—“what then are the objections that do authorize interdiction? But

I admit you to be a *casuist*." Marianne could not tell whether her ladyship's admission was conceding or satirical; for she thought Erdestone bent his head to it, as if he preferred appropriating a compliment to entering into a definition, and Lady Naglefort resumed—"These are trials that make me rejoice I have no children of my own; I should ill have endured to see them madly risk their happiness, when my husband's nephew gives me so much disturbance."—And again she apologized to Marianne, and entered into friendly detail. Marianne related the immediate departure of her mother and aunts, and the cause of it, and begged to apprise them before they went, of an occurrence she should be sorry to make her first letter unwelcome by relating.

"Your ladyship," said Erdestone, as Marianne closed the door. "has done what man or woman rarely does do, behaved with the same complacency to an

individual, who has excited a false suspicion after innocence is established, as before it was arraigned."

"Oh! her integrity and candour is obvious enough," said Lady Naglefort, struggling with her inward vexation.

"Yet you might have stood out for *proofs* to rescue you from the disgrace of being convicted of being *in the wrong*," continued Erdestone. "I have seen many worthy persons by cavil, by feigned credulity, by the most incredible perverseness, by changing the hue and drift of their allegations contrive to save themselves, at least, from the discredit of an *admitted* failure in penetration and judgment; because, as I take it, a littleness of mind, makes them dread a retaliation of such vain glory, as they exhibit, when their own *chance* calculations prove *right*."

Lady Naglefort smiled; and whether, or no, Erdestone thought that latent

distate might arise from the unjust implication of Marianne, her ladyship had warmly maintained with him; the *candour* he gave her credit for had certainly a tendency to add internal good will to outward concessions. She repeated Marianne's exculpation, adding, that her integrity was unimpeachable, and, moreover, accompanied by a *sweetness* that never rendered her steady support of truth repulsive. "O! that her cousin had been like her," she cried; "but she is—— Except for Wolsey's scrawl to you, what a predicament should we have been in! She could'nt think of persuit—we have no authority, she knows, over Wolsey; I do pity her mother, bad——" Lady Naglefort stopped, for a chaise drove to the door, and at the same instant, Mrs. Bessaly and her sisters entered. All of them, though without virulence, condemned Zeluca; but, lest any thing of collusion should be suspected from *una-*

vowed sympathy with Mrs. Delvayne, Jane lamented her shock, and proceeded to state that gratitude and relationship called on Marianne's assiduous endeavours to console her during their absence, which she trusted her ladyship would feel to be duty, untinged with a shade of disrespect to herself.

Lady Naglefort coldly said, "Certainly," and listened, or seemed to listen to the added explanation of Miss St. Orr and Mrs. Bessaly; while Jane, disdain-
ing to *sue* for approbation to a *right* action, continued, in a lower tone, to assert to Erdestone, that Lady Naglefort *must*, on reflection, feel Marianne's attention at such a time to be indispensable. While she was speaking, a note was brought in to Marianne from Mrs. Delvayne, and conversation was universally suspended. Marianne read it, and was then going to give it her mother, but Jane St. Orr, said "read it aloud,

my dear ; whatever it contains, is as interesting, and ought to be as evident to Lady Naglefort as you." Marianne's eyes were filled with tears, and she advanced the letter to her aunt instead of reading it. Erdestone stood between them, and Jane thought he glanced at it, with disguised suspicion of a secret understanding. "Lord, my dear!" she said pettishly to Marianne—"Mr. Erdestone do take compassion on her sensibility, and read it, will you ; for we are really too much hurried to let it go the rounds." Erdestone took it from Marianne's hand, and read aloud :—

"I am persuaded I shall see you, my
" dear Marianne, if I do not interdict
" your visit. But no visit can be toler-
" able to me now ; nor when happiness is
" for ever destroyed by the blackest ingra-
" titude, can the *comfortings* of undis-
" turbed peace and enjoyment be avail-

“able :—excuse me if I am rude; but I am
“conscious of nothing but the *wish to be*
“*alone.*

“Your’s affectionately,
“ELIZABETH DELVAYNE.”

“Poor Woman !” exclaimed Mrs. Bessaly.

“That ‘poor woman’ denotes a very inadequate idea of Mrs. Delvayne’s feelings,” said Jane. “Grief of the bitterest cast, the deepest anguish, could alone make her lose sight of *courteous complaint.* It seems incredible that this unfeeling girl should have violated the confidential understanding that has existed between mother and daughter. I am persuaded, through this business—and yet I feel sure Mrs. Delvayne’s are not the feelings of an angry parent, but of an insulted, rejected friend and coadjutor.”

“At all events,” said Mrs. Bessaly, “she did wrong to go.”

“Wrong to go!” repeated Jane, with an appealing look of impatience, that raised a smile; “Wrong to go! Your computations make me think——”

Lady Naglefort interrupted her. “In truth,” said she, “Mrs. Bessaly does judiciously in putting an end to discussion and investigation, by pronouncing Miss Delvayne *wrong*; for I am sure, in whatever point of view we place the irremediable catastrophe, no attempt to palliate it could be rendered successful; and therefore the less it is canvassed the better.”

“For the reason you alledge, and because we are delaying a journey of some consequence,” said Erdestone, who, in observing the blushes Mrs. Bessaly’s remark brought into Marianne’s cheeks, could only suppose the intellectual disparity between mother and daughter must be accounted for by a more than ordinary share of understanding in her other parent. “So

you really stay at Cowerby alone ?" he pursued to Marianne.

"O, yea," was Marianne's prompt reply; but Lady Naglefort, breaking off apologies for her ill-timed intrusion, declared she must change it into, "O, no!" and with truly friendly solicitation, insisted on carrying her to Greystone. Jane feared *compassion* for her solicitude was the source of the invitation, and she launched a thousand ridiculous charges to Marianne to take care she was not enveigled or trepanned away in this age of knight-errantry: concluding with an assertion, that she would be home in three days, instead of a week, if any apprehensions of that kind induced her to intrude on Lady Naglefort. Marianne was very explicit in abjuring any thing like alarm; but at the same time, very evidently shewed she was pleased, Lady Naglefort still pressed the point with her mother, who yielded with her usual

easy sweetness. "Do you like to go?" whispered Jaffe; and on an affirmative, she merely placed herself so as to defeat Ellinor's purpose of enjoining *daily letters*, and Marianne drove off with Lady Naglefort and Mr. Erdestone, leaving her mother and aunts to repair their unforeseen delay, by giving up their intention of stopping on the road.

N 3

CHAP. V.

"In moments of Difficulty and Distress, it is natural for the most arrogant and stubborn of the Human Race, to wish for the support of Friendship, and of Love, however powerless the Person is, in whose breast they reside."

DR. MOORE.

IF Lady Naglefort evinced disturbance and vexation at Wolsey's elopement, absolutely in contrast to her general equanimity, Marianne had the satisfaction of seeing, that when her anger subsided, she was so sensible of a distinction between

her own and Marianne's sense of injury, that pity for her maternal feelings produced a disposition to mollify the firmness with which Sir Perigrine declared Wolsey should live with his wife on his bachelor's allowance. It was a sentence she had first urged him to pronounce; but it was Mrs. Delvayne's pertinacious refusal to enter into any treaty with him that piqued the Baronet into discision, and made him canvass the *folly* of her conduct, with an asperity, not at all common to him. With the exception of the fears for Zeluca and Wolsey, that thus were constantly excited, Marianne found Greystone a delightful residence; for, contrary to her expectation, the most social ease prevailed: from something grave, and, perhaps, authoritative in Lady Naglefort, she had prepared herself for a degree of formality and constraint in the œconomy of the family; but it was quite the reverse. Sir Peregrine was a keen sportsman and convivial man; for him, there-

fore, Lady Naglefort made a point of having company when he was at home: he was, however, very much out, and whether he was out, or in the midst of friends, Marianne always felt *herself* at home. Lady Naglefort, far from treating her as a subordinate friend, whose every half-hour passed from under her eye, was to be accounted for, gave her to understand she was at liberty to walk—to garden—to read in her own room if solitude was preferable to a companion; and, in fact, to have a taste and choice, not derived from indirect prescription. She herself never walked, but she was still an advocate for exercise, and left Marianne at liberty to enjoy it, without the drawback of *imposing* solitude on her; for, however her guest disposed of herself, she was in the habit of passing some part each day in her own room. Mr. Erdestone had been so much at Greystone, that certain apartments were considered his, and his own pursuits followed in

them, or not, as he pleased, with such conformity to the taste of his host and hostess, that he was considered entirely as one of the family. He was not fond enough of hunting, to consider himself a sportsman, except in the shooting season ; then he was very much out ; at other times he was a studious reader ; but, being also a performer on the clarinet, he contributed greatly to Marianne's amusement. When she was not at Greystone, he shut himself, and his noise, up in his reading-room, happy that the situation of it prevented his being a nuisance ; but as Lady Naglefort was only indifferent, not repugnant to music, he did not scruple to give Marianne the gratification, Zeluca's talents, and constant exertion of them, had rendered habitual to her. And while Lady Naglefort worked, or oftener read, without ever being sensible of his transition from one piece to another, Marianne listened to his exquisite performance, under every circumstance of addi-

cotemporaries; and a witness of their secret feelings is, to them, a most unwelcome consolation; nevertheless, my dear, if you wish to go, I would not prevent you: prejudice apart, I think, you ought, as soon as it is *agreeable* to her to see you."

"I would not for the world intrude," replied Marianne. "I well remember, how strongly she worded her prohibition; but that is a week past. The first condolences she never will receive, without making an effort, and that effort, I think, will be less called for with me than any body; she can, I think, expect no triumph from me. She may, and ought to expect sympathy, unadulterated by one shade of gratification from any source, or any motive." Marianne spoke with earnestness, and Erdestone eyed her with a look that seemed to doubt whether her *sympathy* was not indeed sincere; whether strong and irrepressible interest in Wolsey was not comprised in solicitude for ZelUCA and her mother. Yet he supported

her; said it was not in nature Mrs. Delvayne should decline to admit so considerate a friend, however inimical she might be to common acquaintances; and he asked if she would allow him to drive her, as he thought the walk too long.

“Why, I thought,” said Sir Peregrine, “you was to go with me to Armstrong’s to-day; he wants your answer about the bays.”

“I am to try them first,” answered Erdestone—“and if Miss Bessaly is not afraid of a pair of new horses, it shall be to-day?”

Marianne answered she was not afraid, *gratefully*; for though he met her frequently in the park, and joined her, it was *accidentally*—and the *proposing* to drive her, she put down to his good-nature, in thinking it unpleasant to her to take Lady Naglefort’s carriage to make a visit, to which she was repugnant.

“Very well,” said Sir Peregrine, rising to ring for his own horses. “The

fact is this, Miss Bessaly; you and I are going two different ways, and Erdestone can't, of course, accompany us both; so as he prefers you, he has broken a pre-engagement with me." Marianne laughed, for there was nothing of gallantry in Erdestone's manner to authorise a blush, though he *promptly declared* Sir Peregrine was under a mistake, as to his riding with him; for whether he went to Spire or not, he must *try* his horses. But while he spoke, Marianne had time to call to mind, that Mrs. Delvayne would probably be denied to any equipage, while in walking, according to her usual practice, she might escape being dismissed, or put questions that would procure her admission, if it had not been intended; and favoured by the excuse Sir Peregrine had afforded for her apparent caprice; she again declared walking would be preferable to any mode of conveyance.

"My dear," said Lady Naglefort, "what reason can there be you should not have

the carriage—I yielded to Mr. Erdestone, because, I thought you would prefer a curricule such a morning as this?”

“You do not expect I shall intrude on Mrs. Delvayne with you,” said Erdestone, secretly wondering whether her sudden change was not owing to fears of his witnessing a discussion on Wolsey’s marriage, which would render her feelings apparent. “I,” said he, eager to defend himself from the indelicacy he thought her blushes bespoke a suspicion of—“I will set you down, and protract, or curtail my drive to suit your hour of return. Marianne was ashamed of having created a dilemma, and put an end to it, by stating plainly her idea, which Lady Maitland admitted the force of, and determined to set her down herself at the shrubbery field, and Marianne was to walk home, for which purpose, she received the key of a private gate in the park, curtailing the distance, and affording, at the same time, additional shade. As it was

most convenient to Marianne to enter by the back gate at Spire, she took the privilege of intimacy, preferring to pass the breakfast-room windows, that Mrs. Delvayne might see she was unaccompanied by any other intruder; and accordingly, she heard the bell ring after her rap, to countermand previous orders for dismissal, as she believed; for Mrs. Delvayne rose from a table covered with papers and bills, receipted and unreceipted, and advanced to meet her with thanks for her solicitude, and apologies for having hitherto been too ill to avail herself of it, till suddenly stopping in the midst of eloquent courtesies, that made Marianne wonder from what cause she had allowed the idea of her deep depression to gain ground—she burst into tears, and proved herself, for once, unequal to the performance of her part. “Oh!” cried she, “I have indeed been ill; whatever I had calculated upon going through for Zeluca, I had not thought of being left out of all

participation in her happiness, without one word of information or apology—with an insolent contempt, that rates me below the very animals that carried her from my indulgent love.”

Marianne was touched to the heart, by the deep sobs of an unhappy mother, whose anguish must have been of the deepest cast, to reduce her to invite compassion; and whose sense of ill usage from a daughter, in whom she had never admitted a fault to Marianne in her life, must have arisen from peculiar aggravation in her offence. She wept with Mrs. Delvayne, and earnestly endeavoured to convince her of what she herself believed, that only some indecision in their own plans occasioned the silence Zeluca would break, as soon as she could couple with her regret and submission, information of their residence. And for the elopement itself, she justly stated the temptation to it, in the dread such a disposition as Zeluca's must feel at encoun-

tering the ungracious acquiescence of Lady Naglefort—"And," continued Marianne, "when Lady Naglefort comes to view it as the act of *love*, fearful of her disapprobation, I am persuaded, both she and Sir Peregrine will set the example of reconciliation. She must see it a very different offence from a parent or child trepanning a young man into a runaway match, to conceal the want of fortune, or any other deficiency; in such a case, however, immaterial wealth, the treachery could never be wholly overlooked."

"Fortune," repeated Mrs. Delvayne, with impatient despondence, "a few thousands more or less to them, could have been nothing, if gradually——" she checked herself, but resumed, giving vent to her feelings, though restraining her communication. "Fortune, fame, health, life, is nothing to Zeluca—*mine* I mean. She has every way defeated my happiness, and endeavoured to expose me; but she herself shall suffer—there

are endurances she *shall* find I will not submit to, though yet I have never resisted." Marianne, with avowed incredulity, and internal surprise at Mrs. Delvayne's bitter anger at an act, often easily forgiven, by less indulgent parents, entreated her to dispel the gloomy thoughts that were preying on her peace; and represented, that to anticipate a happy meeting with Zeluca, instead of dwelling on her departure, would be the surest way to recover her happiness.

"A meeting!" repeated Mrs. Delvayne, "I have little chance of a happy meeting—there is, I believe, but one way for me to render myself acceptable to Zeluca, and that" she ended in a low voice, sinking into tears, "is to die, and get out of her way."

"O! my dear, Mrs. Delvayne," said Marianne, moving to her, "this is nervousness—this is imagination—this is so unlike you, you *must* overcome it;" and with persevering arguments, she sought

to prevail with her to admit her friends as usual, representing that the deprivation of society, to which she was so accustomed, was alone sufficient to sink her spirits.

Mrs. Delvayne returned a look of kindness, and after a silence of internal debate, asked if Mrs. Bessaly would receive her for a week. "With you," said she, "I shall have no insults to dread, and can prepare myself for the triumphs of those who are anticipating *condolence* on the *marriage* of my only child? For though I affected it, it will produce nothing to me but refutations of my system of confidential equality between parent and child, illustrated by Zeluca's *gratitude* for my love, my sacrifices, and an education so expensive and superior, as not to be surpassed.

Marianne related the sudden illness of Mrs. St. Orr, with the consequent journey of her mother and aunts. A letter from her aunt Jane, she said, explained the illness, as far as the physicians could

explain it, to be a high degree of paralysis ; her speech was gone, and, as they believed, her intellects affected. The Dean, therefore, wished to keep all his family, till he made up his mind, on determining on a change of climate for Mrs. St. Orr, so that she could not press their return ; but after stating the accidental circumstances that had made her an inmate at Greystone, she said she would merely go back to finish the day, and excuse the abrupt termination of her visit to Lady Naglefort, ~~and be at home to receive her~~ at Cowerby the next morning. Marianne had observed, amidst the changes of Mrs. Delvayne's complexion, as she spoke, that settled disapprobation, not to say disgust, seemed to be the consequence of comprehending her domestication at Greystone. Accordingly Mrs. Delvayne declined taking her from a *visit of pleasure and desirable associates*—dispersed the tears that had been a happy relief to her—dressed up her sarcastic meaning, in a compli-

mentary, assurance that she was very well qualified as well as situated, to exercise her powers of captivation on Mr. Erdstone, and apologized for her emotion, as if it had been a passing expression of superficial sorrow. She then paused; but before Marianne could speak, said she would take her advice, and see every body, which she begged her to signify to their mutual friends—moralized on the efficacy of trifling vexations, to put mortals in mind they were born to be sometimes thwarted. and finally, gave Marianne indirectly to understand, that it was her part to say Mrs. Delvayne had been very much shocked at first, but on reflection, came to see that young people had a right to secure their own happiness in their own way; and that she was recovered of a bilious attack she had been carefully nursing, feeling that Zeluca would be miserable in the possibility the illness should be the result of her misconduct.

While Mrs. Delvayne fluently talked, and dextrously insinuated what she would have said, and with moralizing raillery, introduced the *universal* tendency to probe to the bottom of other's feelings, Marianne could not, but in her secret mind, recoil from a character so made up of craft and subterfuge, even in its best feelings, and nearest approach to virtue; and could scarcely believe that the *dread* of *reported suffering* should convey power to pass off as trivial the anguish she had just witnessed. But when she came away, Mrs. Delvayne's maid stepped out after her, to beg her to persuade her mistress to have some advice, as she had no appetite, and sometimes paced her room of a night, with the indefatigable watchfulness, that proved she had scarcely any sleep. Like all servants, and all whose intellects are narrowed by disuse or selfishness, Mrs. Nelson glanced at no possible extenuation in the enormity she sympathetically felt, and spoke of

Zeluca as a monster of ingratitude. From what she had heard, and what she had overheard, she had expected the rich harvest of a profitable wedding : she expatiated, however, only on the happiness her *mistress* had *expected* in presiding at her daughter's nuptials, and making the most of her beauty by her charming taste in dress ; and without at all entering into the reciprocity of *gratitude* and *benefit*—*real* benefit conferred by mother on child—dwelt on the infamy of Zeluca's having left no letter ; and above all, of having locked up all her drawers, so that her things were lying by to spoil, and get out of fashion, as Mrs. Delvayne would not break them open. Marianne answered coldly to every thing, except Mrs. Delvayne's health, which she said she would exert herself to gain proper advice for, and then came away in deep and saddened reflection, on the art and falseness of Mrs. Delvayne and her factitious views of happiness and superiority, which she

considered as the ground-work of all Zeluca's potent failings, by being engrafted on *her mind*, while her *disposition* and temper was vitiated by inordinate indulgence. Her rumination was deep, and would have been long, had not Mr. Erdestone startled her by descending from a style, on which he was sitting, as she turned from the shrubbery directly over against it. There was so much apparent gallantry in the act of waiting there to become her escort, that Mrs. Delvayne's sarcasm shot across Marianne's remembrance, and raised a deep suffusion in her face, for which she accounted, by pleading the sudden surprize he had given her. Her momentary embarrassment, however, disappeared—for he did not seem to see it; he acknowledged with a smile and an apology, that he had put her to a test no *nerves* could endure, and fell into conversation so naturally and confidentially, that she was disposed to blush alone, at having

appropriated a civility, originating in friendship to Wolsey ; for of Wolsey he directly asked, and if Mrs. Delvayne had heard any thing.

“ Nothing,” said Marianne.

“ Did she mention the letter ?” asked Erdestone.

The transparency of Marianne’s skin, shewed the slightest fluctuation of colour, and a much slighter sensation than the *anonymous letter* created would have produced a heightened tint—he could not but observe her deep suffusion, and that her protracted answer ended in a laconic, and he thought, embarrassed—“ No.”

“ I sent it to her,” pursued Erdestone ; “ for though I little expected Zeluca would have left no line of apology or extenuation, I thought, in her inexperience, she might leave out that most essential to a *mother* actually to *know*. Wolsey’s scrawl to me contained but the single injunction, to signify his marriage

to those most interested to learn it ; and I forwarded it to Mrs. Delvayne before Sir Peregrine waited on her."

" This is the first word I have heard of his letter," said Marianne. " Lady Naglefort dwelt so much on Zeluca's leaving her mother in the *dark*; that I imagined there was nothing but conjecture to decide by."

" Surely, we mentioned it at Cowerby?"

" O, no; there was but *one* conclusion to draw, and in that, I thought, lay your certainty. I am not now *quite* so much surprised at not hearing from my cousin."

" But I am surprised at my own remissness," said Erdestone, " that I should be so absorbed, as to take it for granted you should comprehend, uninstructed, that Wolsey left a letter on his dressing table for me : and he was explicit too—he desired me to tell *all* interested."

" His emphasis was so marked, Marianne was struck by it, and she shewed she was ; yet was she rather disposed internal-

ly, to revolve his meaning, than to demand it ; and said, hastily, that she thought Mrs. Delvayne must be gratified by Wolsey's precaution. Erdestone said he could develop no sufficient cause for Mrs. Delvayne's tenacious resentment, at the manner of completing an union, that was, in itself, all that could be wished, and asked if she thought it was to be accounted for from a failure of confidence in 'Zeluca, or from apprehension, that the transgression denoted a want of feeling or principle in Wolsey. " O, no, no ! cried Marianne, " it is impossible she can see cause to fear such serious deficiencies in him." But having, as far as her opinion went, exonerated Wolsey, she was anxious to turn the subject she was aware investigation would only tend to Zeluca's discredit—she knew, that if the morning's conversation with Mrs. Delvayne was canvassed, she could not pass over her affliction and mortification, as she had signified a wish it should be passed over ; and she felt herself dread that

Erdestone would cover her with confusion by alluding to the anonymous letter. It was, however, with difficulty she succeeded in diverting him from the enquiries he obstinately recurred to ; yet, when she had, at length, substituted a new topic, they became so engrossed with it, or with the enchanting scenery before them, that when she suddenly rose from a seat under a chesnut tree, on which he had recommended her to rest, she found they should but just reach home in time to dress for dinner.

CHAP. VI.

“The successful derision of Affection and Enthusiasm is found to do pretty nearly as well as their possession and hearts comfortably hardened by dissipation, feel little want of gratifications, they have almost lost the capacity of receiving.”—EDINBURGH REVIEW.

LADY NAGLEFORT made no change in the usual disposition of her time, after the first shock on Wolsey's departure, so that the frequency of her engagements would have appeared almost dissipation to Marianne's retired habits,

had not the general dismissal of morning visitors afforded so many hours of uninterrupted privacy, that she attributed to the happy alternation of *evening society*, and *undisturbed* morning avocations, an enjoyment at Greystone, that constituted her visit the happiest era of her existence ; so happy, indeed, that to protract it, she willingly declined availing herself of a good she had hitherto thought beyond her hopes. This unforeseen benefit was an admission into her grandfather's house. Mrs. St. Orr was prescribed change of climate, and the doctor had as far made up his mind to the experiment, that he determined, if it continued to be thought necessary, to accompany her and leave his daughters to reside at the deanery ; and as Jane represented that she could no longer continue, from week to week, to force Marianne on Lady Naglefort's hospitality, but must return to Cowerby to take her home, he suggested it would save an unnecessary journey, if Marianne came to the deanery

without waiting for his departure. But Marianne learnt, with obvious regret, that it rested with herself to name the day for quitting friends, under whose roof she had experienced an uncorrupted enjoyment, that proved the reciprocity of warm and sincere affection, for an *admission* into her grandfather's abode, procured by a representation of the impropriety of excluding her, and accompanied by an intimation, that if Mrs. St. Orr recovered to a knowledge of what was passing around, she must keep out of the way till the doctor set out for the Continent. Lady Naglefort knew enough of Mrs. St. Orr's disaffection to the Dean's family to find a clue to the disappointment that shaded Marianne's brow, and to believe she gratified her young friend as well as herself, by proposing to her still to protract her stay another month; and Marianne made no secret of her satisfaction in forwarding the proposal, though she waited for assent with trepidation, for

she suspected her aunt would recommend the prudence of availing herself of proffered ingress into her grandfather's house. But Jane St. Orr was so averse to intrude the spectacle of Mrs. St. Orr's bodily and mental deprivations on a mind susceptible of lasting impressions ; and thought it besides so wantonly indifferent to her niece's pleasure to abridge her stay at Greystone, if it was mutually agreeable, that, instead of summoning her, she expressed a perfect sense of Lady Naglefort's kindness in rescuing her from the duties of a nurse, where common compassion stood in need of a kinder sentiment to convert them into pleasures. And she proved that the Dean was gratified at Lady Naglefort's countenance of his young relative, rather than offended at her repugnance to intrude on his ungracious courtesy, by enclosing the first present Marianne had ever received from his paternal remembrance in a £30 note. Both Sir Peregrine and Mr. Erdestone

were staying out when Marianne's letter from her aunt arrived—she therefore made a free communication of the whole contents, and with grateful alacrity, prepared to set out instantly, not only to give some directions at Cowerby, but to select, and pack up, and forward such letters and papers as her aunt described, and *hoped* to receive *without mistake or omission*. Lady Naglefort was driving out, and set her down at Cowerby, but at Marianne's representation agreed she should walk home; and Marianne was glad she had not been prevailed on to specify the time at which her Ladyship might call again for her; for, notwithstanding she gave her attention to her employment, she was occupied two hours in that to which she had mentally devoted half an one; her commission was, however, at length completed, and she was descending the stairs, when the bark of *Argus*, and his master's voice at the house-door, saluted her at one and the same moment.

Erdestone had become, by degrees, so invariably Marianne's escort, that had she known of his return, she would have experienced no surprize; but that not being the case, an exclamation as well as a deep blush denoted, what if he had been vain, he might have set down an unexpected pleasure: yet it did not appear to convey such an intimation to him, for he followed her very gravely into the parlour, saying:—"You found me posted at the door as centinel; but though I might, under that fair appearance, elude detection, I will not deny I have been making incursons in the house, and that my curiosity has lighted upon what was not intended for general inspection."

"There is little here calculated for inspection," returned Marianne, glancing over the tiny abode: "yet nothing, I think, in the *true* acceptation of *disgrace*, to which opprobrium attaches—but as you have gratified your own curiosity have mercy upon mine."

Erdestone held up a book.

“ Well !” said she.

“ Well !” returned he. “ Would *Mrs. Wolsey* think it *well* to see ‘ Peregrine Wolsey’ written in this blank leaf ?” but, as if instantaneously sensible, his manner denoted an enquiry not compatible with casual unimportant meaning: he added, with a tone and demeanour wholly altered—“ I think jealousy is an ingredient in her composition, and if so, she ought not to have married a man that her sex universally (as far as my discoveries have gone) denominate a model in *person*, with *qualities* yet more attractive.”

Marianne did not answer.—Surprise, combined with she knew not what other sensations, centered her ideas on Erdestone’s repetition of ‘ Well ;’ and without having taken in one word of his eulogium on Wolsey, when she became sensible she ought to speak, she said “ That book is not mine ; it is borrowed from Mr. Wolsey. I this instant looked it out to

take back and deposit with his other things at Greystone."

Erdestone, though he bent his head over a print on the table, took a lateral view of her countenance; yet forbearing openly to impute the unconscious thoughtfulness he had raised to Wolsey, answered—"I wish he would send for his things; it is the best preliminary to negotiation a renegade could wish for."

He could have said nothing so effectually to withdraw Marianne from herself; for it was the very point on which she had been wishing for an opening to beg him to interfere. "They seem," said she, "to have lost all concern and interest in all their anxious friends. Sir Peregrine and Lady Naglefort have abstained this last week from reprobating their silence, and, I can but think, if they should wear out the solicitude of such friends, it may not be easy to recreate it! Surely," pursued she, "a letter to his chambers would be *forwarded* to him,

wherever he is, and a hint from you would induce him to appeal directly to his uncle."

"There are occasions," said Erdestone, in a significant tone, "when the vigilant eye of woman might well claim to enlighten the penetration of *friendship*, intending to be serviceably *quicksighted*; but," said he, resuming his usual air in the conviction her indirect request was judicious; "but you are quite right. Wolsey shall be *obliged to you* for dissipating Sir Peregrine's growing disgust; this evening I will write explicitly, and warn him not to yield to a natural repugnance to encounter reproof, till the right to give it subsides into a renunciation of all claims on, or from him."

Marianne was deterred from expressing satisfaction, by the significance with which he implied, that her gratification was comprehended in a service to Wolsey; and silence ensued, which she dispelled

by ringing to re-urge the immediate conveyance of her packet; and then looking at Erdestone, tied on her bonnet, repeating injunctions to take care of her plants.

Erdestone followed her, but ere she reached the gate, he asked, if she would not look at her plants herself; and meeting her eye, added, "Come, let me set this slip of verbina. A memorial——" he stopped to prevent the dog leaping on her, and dispelling the penetrating seriousness of his look with a smile, concluded—"A *living* memento should necessarily keep *alive* remembrance;" and then made a transition to a new topic, in which Marianne joined but by monosyllables; for there was occasionally a comprehensiveness in the look and tone that accompanied his unimportant requests, that left her no power of conversing. Yet the incapacity was so transient, it did not lead to self-enquiry, or apparently create observation; for without

appearing to see a deviation from her usual unconstrained ease, his ready fluency invariably restored it; and she was soon sensible to nothing but regret at the *drooping exotics* he could scarcely believe her care had preserved through many winters without any artificial assistance, fond as he knew her to be of flowers. But, on examination, she believed them to be recoverable, and he added his encouragement and services to strengthen her hopes, and her precautions; they transplanted some, cut down others, changed the situation of the drooping, planted and deposited the verbina in the well chosen shelter where she had reared so many; and having repaired her negligence with better promise than she expected, she determined to walk down very soon to judge of the effects of their efforts. They then turned their attention to a favourite honeysuckle, which he trained to the branches of an oak above her reach, and having concluded their labours, gladly availed

themselves of the shady seat, formed by the grotesque protuberances of its antique roots. From the first exercise of reflection, Marianne had observed, with secret wonder and stronger repugnance, that in society *ridicule* of the dear and natural impulses of the feeling heart seemed to be substituted for the pure enjoyment they are capable of affording. And though the circumstances of her life had urged her pride and delicacy to rein in her own spontaneous feelings, in dread of becoming the object of that satire, fictitious heartlessness and overbearing apathy launch at the enthusiasm which is indeed, so often feigned and perverted to collusive purposes, as almost to justify caricature, yet was her mind peculiarly strung to a sense of those delights that take rise in the affections; and her innate disgust to the cold courtesies that stand in the place of good-will and kindness in promiscuous intercourse gain ground, as the charm of sympathetic interchange of

sentiments opened to her an enjoyment that was at Greystone, unalloyed by any drawback. Erdestone, therefore, gradually discovered a susceptible impassioned heart in her, whose beauty, however exalted by the significance of intellect, or the sweetness of real goodness, he had contemplated before his domestication, as characterised by feelings too much unnatural or acquired controul to be keenly sensible of that passion, which, both self-love and sensibility require a capacity of imbibing in its profound excess. And as conviction of her deep sensibility made her a more touching object, so did his regret for that bias to Wolsey, he strongly suspected encrease; though now removed from him, there could be little doubt but they would again be thrown together; and if the embarrassment he had just witnessed arose from being alarmed by the hint of a latent preference he was aware he had given very clearly, he could not but see her

intimacy with her cousin as a most trying test of that virtue he firmly believed self-destined to *practical*, essential morality. A significance of manner—a repetition of her opinions, together with a sort of subdued inclination in Wolsey to talk of Marianne, had first given Erdestone the idea that he felt himself preferred by her ; and his fine person, his engaging disposition, and his lively talents, seconded by the complacency such a conviction would create, were not likely to be unoperative, if, as Erdestone apprehended, Wolsey had already so much the largest share in the interest she avowed for the *new married couple*. Erdestone was himself sensible of an engaging accessibility in Marianne, distinct from common-place cordiality, and incompatible with a *wearying passion* for an absent object ; yet that did not disprove a *latent* preference for another, though it would have encouraged him to attempt to succeed to it, if he had had such

an object at heart; but his thoughts never reverted to the ostensible *advantages* so likely to give success to his *pretensions* without renewed caution in the developement of a point he was sensible he had no pretence to *enquire* into without following up on his own account. Accordingly, he so frequently rendered Zeluca the vehicle to introduce Wolsey, that Marianne could not but sometimes think, as he professed no approbation of her distinct from her musical talents, that those talents were coveted, and missed, with an anxiety that rendered her as *important* to him as the most favoured object; and when, on a pause in their conversation, he took the book out of her hand, saying, “ I warn you, you must relinquish this if you wish to maintain your place in Zeluca’s favour.” She would have answered—*Mrs. Wolsey* should be *obliged* to *him* for *reclaiming* the volume, as *he was* resolved not to

allow her the *credit of voluntary* restitution—had he not, turning over the leaves, continued without a pause—

“The ‘Corsair’ too—reply not—tell not now thy tale again

“Thou lov’st another—and I love in vain.”

The clock of the village church at the foot of the valley struck, and Marianne, listening with all the alarm of presentiment, exclaimed with the last stroke, “It actually is the dinner hour!”

He was on his feet too in an instant, and in reply to her perturbed half sentences, observed, that they had nothing to do but to walk as fast as possible.

Marianne considered that doing nothing, and exclaimed in despair, “Lady Naglefort will never look to me again as having the common thought of rational infancy! If it was a quarter of an hour after the time—if I had a reason, an excuse.”

“Nay,” cried Erdestone, “every body is guilty of such an inadvertence occasionally;” and he urged her to take his arm, while she still inwardly ejaculated, that they should be an hour and a-half behind the time. “You shall not go this pace, cried Erdestone; “What can it signify; Sir Peregrine is out; and Lady Naglefort is no epicure.”

“True; most fortunate;” but, though Marianne slackened her pace for a moment, she renewed the speed that rendered her almost breathless; and Erdestone, unwilling to distress, by delaying her, and distressed at the tokens of fatigue he saw, turned from the cross-path they were pursuing at sight of a one horse chaise in the road, and besought her to let him commit her to the farmer who was in it.

“O, no,” said Marianne, “besides he is so far off he cannot hear, and——”

Erdestone convinced her to the contrary, by hailing him, and running for-

ward, explained his anxiety, that a lady who was fatigued, and afraid of alarming her friends by delay, should be set down at the south gate of Greystone Park. Marianne saw he was successful, and returned his smile, though so much exhausted, that she was obliged to permit him to *lift* her over the style. "I cannot," said he, in an under voice, as he almost carried her down the bank, "exclaim with the wit of old——

"By all the gods 'twas bravely done,

"Thus to attempt the chariot of the sun."

but if you have a less aspiring charioteer, you will escape Phæton's fall."—And placing her by the companion who respectfully re-adjusted himself for her accommodation, Erdestone darted again over the style with an intention to cut across in time to receive her; and he used so much expedition, that he was at the gate when she stopped. Though

grateful to her obliging friend for what time had been saved, Marianne too well knew there was none to be lost. She asked Erdestone what the hour was; and consoled at finding it almost half-an-hour better than she expected, ran up the avenue with some degree of hope; and at length found herself breathless, and almost fainting, in a situation quite new to her—the source of surprise and dilemma to the mistress of the mansion—the cause of completely spoiling the dinner—and the object of tiresome expectation to the servants, whom she found one stretching his head to command one path—another cramming his neck with a determination to distinguish her in the road where she was not—a third carrying off his impatience by pacing before the house in his circuit from the dining-room to the kitchen—with Lady Naglefort herself at the steps of the hall-door, *happy* to see no accident had happened. But an accident, unless of a very serious nature, is unattended

With the irksome feelings, that in an oversight so neglectful and so indefensible, never fails to elicit *wonder*, no apprehension is too dull to interpret displeasure, under modifications, more or less lenient. Marianne, at the formidable sight of Lady Naglefort, was most truly happy to sink into the silence, rendered necessary by Erdestone's prompt and copious explanation; till struck by the significant seriousness of Lady Naglefort's eye, she became aware that devolving her justification on him, was giving a sanction to suppose that a sort of secret understanding, bound him to save her the degradation due to a *permitted* engrossment approaching to impropriety; and her eagerness to speak, became as predominant as her previous desire to find a refuge for her embarrassment in his volubility. She stated, however, nothing but the fact; admitting, that after putting her plants in order, they had had plenty of time, if, in the enjoyment of setting in the shade to recover the

transient fatigue they had not unaccountably missed taking note of the hour; and had Lady Naglefort not been able to distinguish between the indelicate levity of a determined flirt, and an accidental oversight far more painful to the culprit than enquirer, she would have thought Marianne had said nothing more to the purpose than Erdestone had advanced. But she respected the strict veracity, that amidst overpowering shame and self-condemnation, never thought of fabricating a difficulty in her commission, though it would have been an uncontrovertible, if not a satisfactory allegation; and accordingly dropped wonder and congratulations at seeing Marianne *well*; to say that the worst of the disaster was, that she had hurried so as to run the risk of making herself *ill*. Observed, that not being a walker herself, she overlooked all the various inducements to protract a stroll—never hinted at any compliment to Erdestone in her inadvertence—and never again,

either angrily or jestingly, alluded to the occurrence, Marianne expected to hear related to Sir Peregrine, when he came home in the evening, in the painful consciousness, she had laid herself open to jests Sir Peregrine might have been apt to say a *female tete-a-tete* would not have given room for.

CHAP. VII.

"Why choose we misery? Most derive their birth

*From one bad source—we dread superior worth;
Then we abstract our views, and Envy show
Whence springs the misery Pride is doom'd to
know."*—**Savage.**

THOUGH Lady Naglefort never alluded to the spoiled dinner, or the cause of it, and though Marianne never repeated in any degree, the inadvertant negligence of which she was so truly ashamed; yet from the day that it occurred a new conviction gradually took possession of Lady Naglefort's mind; and im-

pelled her to the most ungracious of all duties, that of giving *advice* before *advice* should be too late. "Mr. Erdestone," said she, one wet morning, in which they had all been confined within doors, "Mr. Erdestone has given us so much music this morning, I began to despair of finding opportunity to give you a hint; but he has just left me time before you go to dress. Recollect, that though we have only a gentlemen party to-day, you must not neglect your toilette; for Captain Cassenberd has returned in good time—this note is to say he does dine with us."

"I hope," said Marianne, anxiously, "you don't really think what your words imply ma'am? I see he has resumed something of his original—original—"

"Devotedness," said Lady Naglefort.

Marianne smiled, and went on; "but I do not mean to prove myself so capricious as to keep pace with his changes."

“ Well, that is exactly what your conduct to him says for you, as well as you for yourself ; but as his *alterations* justify reprisal in some degree, and you do not affect inaptitude to his assiduities by way of procuring to yourself the credit of a rejection, I thought I had the more reason to judge, that eventually you intended to mollify towards him.”

“ No, indeed, I have proceeded upon no system but that of exhibiting my real feelings,” said Marianne.

“ Then you do not take occasion to raise yourself on the list of *desirables*, by satisfying your conscience, that it is *fair* to retaliate humiliation, by humbling a long demurring pretender.”

“ O when I wish to raise myself,” cried Marianne, “ it shall be in a mind that would see the degradation of such fictitious eminence !”

“ In my opinion,” said Lady Naglefort, “ a man of true delicacy would

justify the feeling you express : he would, in times like these, when the intercourse between the sexes is conducted on such a footing of equality—feel a woman *sunk* by all rejected overtures—he would see *her simulation* chargeable with the defeat, pride, or self-love, would never venture on, unauthorised, by latent or obvious approbation ; and the pride of a truly delicate man, would be more wounded in the prostituted smiles of the woman he loves, than gratified at a tribute to his vanity in the rejection of contemporaries. But this idea does not prevail. I wish it did ; it would be a death blow to art and intrigue in our sex ; it would put an end to the complicated falseness with which women struggle for the additional value an offer is considered to confer on them ; it would save the eager and impatient from the ridicule they so often incur by failing in their object ; and with the more dignified and political, it would put an end to the systematic de-

plicity with which they maintain their *quiescent inaptitude*, while friends, and puffers, and producers are bringing about their exaltation. No ; my firm opinion is, that men never proffer a heart without expected requital, and that expectation cannot take root without obvious or latent encouragement, in the present era, when the sexes are so entirely upon a footing."

" Sometimes, surely—" Lady Naglefort, interrupted Marianne. " O, exceptions are always allowed ; there is a degree of weakness and vanity more intellectually feeble than infancy, and blinder than the physically dark ; but——" The door opened, and stopped Lady Naglefort ; for Sir Peregrine entered, and sent them off to dress : he had ridden hard to be in time himself, and expressed his surprise at their dilatoriness ; and in truth, Marianne was obliged to use her utmost expedition. The party was a large and promiscuous one ; and in evading a seat at

dinner by Captain Cassenberd, Marianne found herself where she least wished to be, between the Bishop of Clune and General Norris, who was not much his junior, or his superior in any respect ; but if she was forced to feel *eating* to be the sole object of the majority of the party, she had the less regret at leaving them to the joys of *drinking*, and was glad Lady Naglefort retired early ; for a long *tete-a-tete* with her ladyship, who set the example of perfect ease to her inmates, was not formidable. Directly Marianne entered the drawing room, she seated herself to transcribe some manuscript verses, and pursued her occupation while Lady Naglefort gave her credit for an ingenuous demeanour to Captain Cassenberd that must discountenance him. “ I say ingenuous,” repeated Lady Naglefort, “ taking it for granted you *do* mean to discountenance him ; if not, my dear, if you only mean retaliation for his inconsistency, let me warn you, there is so much *apparent real* indiffer-

ence in your deportment, that his pride will soon lead him to proclaim, that he had never any serious thoughts of you." Marianne only paused to say, she should not therefore feel humbled; but on Lady Naglefort's again addressing her, she laid down her pen. "I know not," said her ladyship, "whether I was swayed by his accession of fortune, or mechanically yielded to a prejudice I know to be vulgar and false—that a calm temper, and what is called a prudent turn, lean to disregard strong affection in a matrimonial union; yet it is certain, that in my own mind, I looked upon you as eventually Captain Cassenberd's wife when you came to stay with me; and I was less likely to correct my error on this point, from having had, since you have been with me, little opportunity of comparing your behaviour to him and other young men; for I set apart Mr. Erdstone as decidedly not a marrying man; though," pursued her ladyship, "I ought, perhaps, to re-

collect that young women, seeing him without my knowledge of his *father's* views, and his deference to them, may not pass off his assiduities as mere courtesies."

Lady Naglefort, penetratingly, though not obviously, marked the countenance of her auditor, which was suffused with crimson, while a faint half-sentence imported that it was impossible she should be so vain as to take Erdestone's civilities for other than polite attentions to her ladyship's guest.

"Indeed, my dear," said Lady Naglefort, "I grieve to observe, that inadvertently or wilfully, he has attached himself to you, with a quiet unintermitting interest, that is the more insidious; because, as you observe, the obvious construction was cordiality to an amiable inmate; consequently, you have been open to an influence you were not prepared to withstand. It is not that *love* can be charged on his unpretending interest in you; but I doubt if to a sensible

feeling heart, any system of deportment can tend more forcibly to create it."

Lady Naglefort's tone rendered her opinion a *question*, and Marianne found ample power of reply ; for no unlooked for insight into her own feelings—no eagerness for self-scrutiny—no impatience to take a retrospective view of the tenor of Erdestone's conduct superseded, for one moment, her anxiety to disclaim the vanity, the presumption, the sensitiveness imputable to the supposition that Erdestone could be laying himself open to censure, by the polite consideration that she said exalted himself in giving her the welcome sensation of being raised.

Lady Naglefort observed the modesty and pride that dictated her disavowal of Erdestone's assiduities ; but she firmly believed the effect of them was deep, and that with so much dignity and delicacy, either self-reproach would be the cruelest of emotions, if she must charge her preference on her own accessibility ; or that

hope, after the first despondence on self-scrutiny, would complete the destruction of her peace, if she was suffered to consider Erdestone merely restrained by consideration for his father. "My dear," said she, "that Mr. Erdestone's attentions to you have been impressive is indubitable: my eyes were first opened by a trifling occurrence, and I see his conduct has been systematically, though unobtrusively meaning. It is strange, it is singular, that no man—(for the exceptions are too few to reckon on,) that no man can resist the delicious opportunity of rendering himself the idol of the woman, whose superiority, from whatever source derived, makes her misery a grievous consideration, even to the self-love that covets gratification at any price; but I have seen this trait exhibited by the very men who have piqued themselves on the *capability of acting up to the golden rule*, by the *talent of dispassionately identifying the feelings and the rights of the*

individual thrown in any degree, on their voluntary sacrifice of practicable wrong."

Marianne, by an effort at a smile, endeavoured to disclaim the application of Lady Naglefort's warning, and keeping her eyes fixed on her paper, said, "That is a dereliction from candor and consistency, as well as rectitude; that——"

"That," continued Lady Naglefort, taking up the sentence Marianne was most willing to quit, "that proves a moral man in the general adaptation of his conduct to 'just and right,' cannot withstand blinding himself and others by casuistry, when an indulged propensity becomes imperative; such men, when they cannot, or will not, meet the expectation of the heart, they have enveigled into a reliance on definitive purposes, bring forward their justification, by proving that common *rationality* discredited the possibility of the supposed *end* in view; forgetting that the "course of true love" being admitted "never to run smooth,"

the votaries of passion act in defiance of moral impossibilities, and regulate expectation by the frequent proofs that immutable determination is victorious over obstacles common sense is scouted for bringing forward; and, I suspect," concluded Lady Naglefort, "Erdestone is a reasoner of this cast."

"With regard to me, ma'am," said Marianne, "if I would, I could not alledge——"

Lady Naglefort stopped her. "And if you *could* alledge, I believe you would not; but you may nevertheless *feel*, my dear, and should be prepared——"

Marianne interrupted in her turn. She was most eager to avert a suspicion of expectations, so sanguine and irrational, that she could not admit her own unwary belief of them, but put down her embarrassment to the abrupt arraignment of her delicacy and reason. "Indeed, I am prepared," said she, "indeed, I never conceived—in fact, I know I am too rea-

sonable to excite love in almost any man. I have always set myself down as excluded."

Lady Naglefort smiled tenderly at an eagerness to avert discussion, that shewed how deep was the wound it probed. "You, certainly," said she, "come not into the list of enchantresses distinguished as 'just not ugly,' and just not mad ;' and, I believe such praise (comprehending so much *method* in the madness, as to include *systematic flattery*) lies the most capacious power of making conquests. But as you are not *merely* a reasonable woman, but a beautiful one in face, in form, and motion—putting the exalted qualities of the heart and mind out of calculation, you may expect, that as your reasonableness does not stifle the acutest feelings in yourself, it will give promise to those who have penetration to read the soul, of the most gratifying capacity, to appreciate the merit conscious of superiority. Erdestone has a delicate and refining taste,

and it is not unfair to think will be apt to exert his power of pleasing on the judgment that can value, and the beauty that touches him."

"Beauty!" said Marianne, a deep suffusion mantling over her face; "beauty without *any education* cannot charm him! I cannot alledge against him that he has insinuated the possibility of such an effect in the most peerless personal loveliness."

"Education!" repeated Lady Naglefort, disdainfully—"It is not from the abuse of any thing we should argue against the use of it I know; but every gradation of intellect, down to that barely competent to menial usefulness, is bound over to prosecute the sciences: so that, upon my word, I turn from the babble and common-place of female knowledge, in conviction, such proficients will at length degrade what is in itself exalted, and above all price."

"O the mere insignia of learning," said

Marianne, "the technicalities of the school-room can but allure the superficial, and must be ludicrous as well as contemptible to the competent."

"And, upon my word," returned her ladyship, "those are nearly as ludicrous and contemptible, who, wrapped up in the self-complacency of their hard-earned knowledge, without a ray of genius or intellectual superiority to derive, or communicate pleasure by what they know, find their attainments of the sole value of throwing cotemporaries to a distance. The *lowering* the tone of the conversation to a *higher intellect* is, in such, amusing, till it wearies, and confirms the conviction, that this unsustained knowledge is the wreck of domestic felicity, bringing disappointment to him who relies for happiness on the qualifications of book wisdom."

"Yet, surely," asked Marianne, "if it is a *vulgar* and *obsolete* notion, that

the other sex are jealous of female learning and science, such advantages can deduct nothing from the attractions of a wife?"

"Competent men," cried her ladyship, "cannot fear or envy genius in man or woman they adore; and who will deny that is should be cultivated. But women who have no genius, and no understanding, are educated to attract men who have nothing of elevation belonging to them, but the wish to add a wife of pre-eminent attainments to their other superlative possessions; and the gratification of that vanity is generally the sole enjoyment that attends the completion of their ambition; for the affections of the heart, and the silent unobvious virtues that are the ground-work of the endearing sympathies of connubial life, are sacrificed to the admiration that is the sole end and aim of female existence. In my opinion, learning removes the salutary barrier between the occupations of the sexes; but whether *self-value* (which the fear of ridicule conceals behind a mask of affability

and humility) results from a greater or less degree of knowledge, the heart must be adulterated by it, in an education where what is sought, and attained, is to dazzle and astonish—where all that is endearing, is distorted to the production of effect—and where all that touches upon virtue, is cant, for parade too, and for parade alone. For my own part," concluded Lady Naglefort, "I see nothing preposterous in our young nobility having fixed upon the *stage*, as the progressive step to the peerage, for the attractions and the drift of an actress are precisely those of our educated women." Lady Naglefort was a woman of first rate understanding, and deep reflection, and having much leisure, and much mental activity, she sometimes embodied her thoughts in a regular form; and Marianne had seen manuscript compositions, entitled to the praise of moral and religious essays, elegantly, and perspicuously written. She did not wonder, therefore, that Lady Naglefort looked

with scorn on *educated mediocrity*, distinguished by the praise of *intellectual pre-eminence* she felt due to herself, though only granted by the few internally qualified to adjudge it. But being aware of the learning in her ladyship, she was guarded not to sink her own deficiency in a depreciation of that competence, excellent in itself, though valueless perverted and mis-appropriated ; while, therefore, she admitted *much* justice in Lady Naglefort's strictures, she said, she kept in mind the maxim she had just quoted, not to argue against the use by the abuse of a thing ; and that consequently, however resolutely she endeavoured to make up for the deficiencies of education, by what improvement it was in her power unassisted to attain, she could not, at all times, but lament the untoward occurrences of her youth that had deprived her of resources that would have been an incalculable advantage to a life so retired as her's. "Independent," said she, "of that less legitimate enjoyment,

my vanity, like that of all my race, would doubtless have derived from excited admiration." Lady Naglefort looked grave a moment, then said—"It is true, my love, you would not have degraded *learning*, nor I believe *yourself*, in displaying embellishing accomplishments; but who is not deficient in some of the leading advantages Providence wisely withholds, in merciful consideration of our proneness to self-importance." Marianne raised her eyes in token of assent, and contentedness, and Lady Naglefort continued—"Erdestone shews in you, how much, though unconsciously, he has been the votary of prescription; for you have taken captive a fancy, that has resisted allurements, sustained by every *acquirement*, he *believed*, he thought *indispensible*; and touched—observe, I do not say *obtained*—a heart that has withstood beauty set off by every adventitious aid. But I intend not to tell you what it is agreeable to hear. I mean to prevent his admiration being detrimental to you, by stating facts that will

prevent your intrusions, even in wishes on the paramount claims of another."

"Indeed!" said Marianne—"I cannot bear you should suppose an expectation so arrogant—so visionary——"

Lady Naglefort interrupted her. "You do me injustice," said she, "if you think I am plausibly beating about to introduce the intimation, that you ought to hold Mr. Erdestone above your hopes; for you have beauty, family, and might have fortune, if your grandfather ceased to be unjust; and wealth is the chief good in Lord de Worde's scale of happiness. He, though a miser, allows his son an ample income; and such a stretch of fondness gives scope to suppose, that with the ardent desire to see him married, he might be reconciled to any choice. It is not him, therefore, I look upon as the great obstacle, however *dutifully* or *prudentially* Erdestone may shrink from his displeasure—it is, that Erdestone himself is not free. I have not *proofs* at command, but I firmly believe he is engaged."

"Oh, impossible!" exclaimed Marianne, and then in hope to pass off her exclamation, added, "at least it is very surprising." Lady Naglefort appeared neither to heed her words, nor to take notice of the burning cheek next her, that Marianne in vain endeavoured to conceal by resting it on her hand. "I firmly believe," continued her ladyship, "Erdestone is unwilling to pain his father; how far he is influenced by prudential motives one cannot judge. After early youth, it is not feeling, but weakness that induces us to throw up any good experience has proved to be indispensable; but that he has an engagement kept inviolably secret on his father's account, I have no doubt, though I have only conjectures to go upon; and he is not a man with whom one can defy a *virtual interdiction* of interference or curiosity."

"No, certainly," said Marianne; perhaps with more alacrity from finding Lady Naglefort had only conjecture for her criterion.

But Lady Naglefort was too penetrating to let her build hope on so unstable a basis. "Indefinite minutiae," said she, "in particular circumstances, is equivalent to proof. I will, therefore, state some inconsiderable facts I should never have repeated, had I not a purer motive than the aim of making myself a party in a cause in which I am 'not consulted. It is now about two years that Erdestone has been in the constant habit of receiving letters, sealed 'Louisa;' and about that time there has been a striking alteration in his whole character and manners. And surely of this you must be aware, for you have been at Cowerby long enough to call to recollection the different man he was; you must have been sensible at your first introduction to an inertness—a coldness—a sort of forced adaptation of himself to his company; from whom he seemed to look with eagerness for the hour of escape."

"Yes, oh yes," repeated Marianne, with conviction, firm as Lady Naglefort's;

for it was the very alteration she had laid so much stress upon to Zeluca. And she could not beguile herself into disbelieving the cause of the change, though she had miscalculated the object; she recollected too, the manuscript song, the evening before Zeluca's elopement, and the strong emotion it conveyed; and she thought it unnecessary Lady Naglefort should add another corroboration. Yet she attended with pervading eagerness, when Lady Naglefort continued to say, that neither the correspondence, or the seal, carried such confirmation to her as Erdestone's manner one morning, when Wolsey, looking accidentally at the back of a letter, made an exclamation of surprise at the female name, followed by a very natural enquiry. Erdestone, after hesitating, at length said something so remote from explanation, and so repelling, that the subject was universally felt not to authorise a joke, "Whether," concluded her ladyship, "the connection was felt to

be a *casual* one or not, for that is the point on which my doubts turn. The seal is changed to L. C. by way of eluding common curiosity I suppose; but the letters arrive as punctually as usual." *A casual connection*, were the words that still resounded in Marianne's ears, after Lady Naglefort ceased speaking, and would have urged her to ask if she thought *him* capable of such a connection, could she have commanded her voice. Lady Naglefort saw she could not, and considerably quitted the room, and Marianne's gushing tears denoted the anguish, that was as surprising to herself as it was deep. But after the first indulgence of irrepressible emotion, she became sufficiently mistress of herself, to embrace the half-hour kindly left her, to recal her firmness; she forced herself from scrutiny into Erdestone's conduct, and from following up the retrospections, that were fain to call her thoughts from the time present, which she felt to be the only time to save herself in Lady

Naglefort's opinion, from a presumption, a weakness, an unregulated sensibility, which, however considerably charged on Erdestone, Marianne knew must be attributed to her, if she did not at the first *hint* of her folly and danger, shew she deserved the delicacy with which it was given, by disproving an *actual* attachment that the dreaded imputation of interestedness alone made her most anxious to disclaim, and to surmount. And she was so far successful in her efforts, that she voluntarily entered into conversation, when Lady Naglefort returned into the room ; but suppressed feelings produced such an intense and overpowering head-ache, that Lady Naglefort noticed her heavy eyes, and predicted a threatening cold ; and Marianne most gratefully accepted the recommendation to avert it, by retiring to rest directly after tea.

CHAP. VIII.

*“Man’s Bliss is like his Knowledge but surmis’d;
One Ignorance, the other Pain, disguish’d.”*

Savage.

IN the privacy of her own room, Mari-
anne felt that sorrow has its enjoyments;
for there she was free from the dread of
betraying her shame and her weakness.
She looked back to her long and intimate
acquaintance with Erdestone, and per-

ceived that the curiosity and interest in his feelings, Zeluca had urged her to, unwarily continued, and encreased, when Zeluca's supposed influence was wholly discarded; and conscious of a solicitude *before* her long and dangerous domestication with him, on her own weakness, her own indefensible susceptibility, she charged the evil that in the despondence of her depression she represented as robbing life of all shadow of enjoyment. Instructed early in the deprivations of her lot, to submit to it, she thought her best plan of happiness; and had determined to glide quietly on in the track of *contented* humility, to which, she believed, love in her inauspicious circumstances, must prove an insurmountable impediment. But, unwarily taking the strength of that conviction for the competent power of resistance, she had laid herself open to an evil, to which she believed she had been invulnerable, and was as surprised as shocked, to find herself the dupe of her self-confidence, and

a proof of what she had foreseen, that love was to her a *serious evil*, and not the harbinger of delicious difficulties and perplexities, which prosperous happy youth secretly and triumphantly feels it to be almost invariably. Had she simply been made acquainted with the state of her own heart, she believed, the single life, she had always made it a point with herself to look forward to in her secret conferences with her own judgment, would have been sweetened by an interest neither delicacy nor rectitude interdicted for an unappropriated object ; but to find Erdestone devoted to another—to feel she had been involuntarily encroaching on privileged affection—that she had volunteered her love to a pre-occupied heart, comprehended all that was bitter and cruel to delicacy and passion, will still an encreasing aggravation in his double dealing ; for in her secret investigations to herself, she confessed (though delicacy and dignity shrunk from the ap-

pearance of complaint in admitting it to another) that Erdestone's had not been the conduct of a pre-engaged man in heart or promise. The all-sufficiency of her society—the feeling of enjoyment when together, which, when she became sensible of in herself, she saw he had, or *appeared* to partake—and above all, the *arraigning* curiosity, at every hint of Wolsey's name, was incompatible with a pre-devoted hand or affections; and when she reflected that Lady Naglefort's coincidences were unaccompanied by any reference to a sanctioned engagement, the *possibility* of what she termed a *casual connection*, accelerated the motion of Marianne's blood through her veins. But she had scarcely given birth in thought to what she instantaneously called a calumny, than her reproaches recoiled on herself, for seeking to save her own pride, by throwing a stigma on his morals; and after a watchful night she closed her eyes towards morning, amidst prayers for re-

solution to conquer her own ill-advised affection, without justifying her susceptibility, by supposing his comparative freedom. Nevertheless, her first waking, like her sleeping thoughts, presented the frail character of Erdestone's attachment, and the object of it, with a pertinacity, she called presentiment; but which probably arose from that *touching* manner to herself, more comprehensive than the most definite professions; though only the individual eliciting can fully interpret the significance that seems *virtually* to disclaim all other sympathies. But through whatever influence the apprehension gained ground, she was sensible of the temptation to rectitude and purity; in the *implied affection* of a man so connected; and resolving never voluntarily to trust to her own fortitude in a doubtful danger even, when she could secure retreat, she determined to fabricate a reason for returning home, trusting to Lady Naglefort's giving her credit for a good

motive, and braving the imputation of caprice that might be cast on her from other quarters. She was, however, sensible that her unsustained suspicions were no justification of an *altered* deportment to Erdestone; and was so long in arguing herself into the propriety of maintaining her usual behaviour, for the short time she intended to be with him, that she at length hurried down to breakfast, in the idea she should have had a summons, but from Lady Naglefort's consideration of her previous indisposition; and consequently, she started back on finding Erdestone the only occupant of the breakfast-room. He put down his book on her entrance, and rose to meet her. "You retired ill last night," said he, "and I fear you are not better? for——"

"I am perfectly well this morning," said Marianne, and she took up his book for a resting place for her eyes, which she dreaded he should see fill with tears; yet she replaced it directly, for she was

conscious her countenance was under his scrutiny, and walked to the window.

But to the window it was natural he should also walk—he did—and recommended the open air directly after breakfast, as the very best restorative for the head-ache; “and I trust,” said he, with ineffable kindness and suppressed suspicion of latent uneasiness—“I trust your illness is nothing more?——”

Marianne said, “No, nothing more.” And while in the act of wishing she could light upon something more to say, that would prevent his resuming with a solicitude she could not stand, Sir Peregrine entered, and made so many jokes on Lady Naglefort’s appearing most affected, by the drinking bout of the day before, by her being *last*, that Marianne was enabled to be laughing when she made her appearance; and she trusted to behave altogether as usual, as some anecdotes of the preceding day excused her from any active share in the conversation. Erdes-

tone declined riding with Sir Peregrine after breakfast; and as if waiting for an opportunity to suggest a proposal to Marianne, read, every now and then, some passages from Busby's *Lucretius*, as he leaned against the window. But Lady Naglefort, instead of signifying her plan for the morning, took up her work, with the usual appearance of fixing herself at it,—Marianne did the same, and he was thinking whether she intended to discard it, when Mrs. Serle's carriage entered the park; and Lady Naglefort said, she *would* be at home, as she was less disinclined than usual.

"But you, I guess," said Erdestone to Marianne, "are utterly *disinclined* to adopt her ladyship's *inclination*? At least, Miss *Emcotts* is the last remedy I would resort to for the *head-ache*."

Marianne just smiled.

"Don't you agree with me?" said he.

"You have time to make *your escape*,"

observed Lady Naglesfort, before Marianne could reply; but as he still lingered, he had *not*, and laid down his book to go, as Mrs. Serle and Miss Emcotts were announced. Miss Emcotts asked his author, and opening the book, said, "Ah this passage! 'When youthful spring!'—now, thy lord, your opinion it is I want; remember, I dare say you do, '*Avia tum resonant avibus*, &c.' and Virgil certainly——" And there she broke off, with every symptom of contrition for having committed a glaring outrage on the feelings of the bye-standers, by the lapse of profundity. Erdestone begged her to proceed, but said, if she was going to charge Virgil with an invitation of Lucretius, he must have recourse to the original, unless her memory could supply the deficiency of his.

"O, no, no!" cried she, casting down her eyes, with a seeming consciousness of having raised the most cruel feelings.

"No memory have I, or I should not have *forgot myself* thus, Lady Naglefort," proceeded she, volubly—"about my monkey, I shall set you ladyship wild; just from town my creature is come, and such there never was." An universal assent to the entertaining tricks of the animal was denoted at her momentary pause, to which she answered, "Oh! extremely entertaining all those creatures are, but none up to this could ever come, I think; most wonderful it was now, yesterday, Mrs. Serle, as I told you."

"It was indeed," said Mrs. Serle.

Miss Emcotts proceeded with lispings volubility—"To the general, I said in the morning, 'Why don't you, general, tell Sir John Dawlish, cockades his servants ought to have; one will I send him of your's, for a *hint* I declare—'pug was on my shoulder, and so extraordinary it was, before dinner I went to speak again to my creature, and there was he putting a

cockade he had twisted up into the general's round hat for a *quiz* you see upon me."

"You must apprentice him to Shubridge," said Erdestone, with a smile, that would have been completely forced, if he had not been *amused* with the latent disgust of Lady Naglefort's countenance; which, it was evident, Miss Emcotts imputed to mortification, and went on.

"Such a scrape he brought me into, you cannot guess; he hid my note that ~~I left on the table to go by the servant~~

Miss Dawlish, and folded up a piece of paper, and not only direct it did he, but *post paid* he wrote."

Not the potency of *fashion* could give flavour to the *mongrel marvellous* with Lady Naglefort; to her it was a complete soporific instead of a quickener, and she must have yawned if she had not indulged her vexed feelings by a laconic reply, so fraught with sarcasm, that Miss Emcotts qualified her anecdote, by adding, "for

all the world *like a direction*, with p. p. in the corner, he scrawled the paper."

Marianne seeing Lady Naglefort's listlessness, joined more energetically with Mrs. Serle in the repetition of "Really, wonderful! astonishing!" and afforded Miss Emcotts her highest gratification. She was most anxious to prove to Mr. Erdestone, that she combined the talent of *entertaining* people of a certain standard, of whom it was fair to ask, what *topics they could have* in common with her, with a capability of the profoundest kind: and being quite as willing to display her egotism, and the *wonders* that had always attended *her*, to the unpretending as to those, more disposed to "*out Herod*," than to give *decent* tokens of *credulity*, she resumed—"Now for the price of my little dear pug, you must guess."

Erdestone concluded the string of guesses, by ridiculously, as he thought, saying, "fifteen guineas."

"Cheap it would have been at twenty-

five," said she. "When my father was alive, one I had given me that cost thirty; but keep it he would not let me. When in the day engrossed I was with my master, and my studies, steal a little bit of time, from night, I would, for my pug; and my spirits are too much for my strength, and such a cheat to my pillow, he would not let me be."

"No, indeed," said Lady Naglefort, with alacrity; for she very much preferred pug, to an account of illnesses, and disorders, that would have brought an *immortal* to death's door; mixed up with such feats and visitings as would have upset any being but a fine Lady Savans. "No, he was very right; the present depredation on your pocket is much preferable to the depredation on your health he foresaw."

"Oh, Lady Naglefort, there is my usual luck for *this fellow*—only *three guineas* I gave—quite an accident it was:

I went the next day to the woman that sold it me, to know, for him, what sort of table I must keep; 'O, ma'am,' says she, 'my husband, I thought would have beat me; *ten guineas* he did intend to ask of the trade again to sell it, and I let it go for three;' quite grieved I was she should get such a scolding for my good bargain. And, that very day, I was again more lucky; I did insist upon my famous old music man getting me a *real* Welsh harp; and what do you think I gave?—all the way he did go into North Wales to get it for me, and £.140 he only would take; he brought one too, for Lord Melksham, and £.203 him he charged, 'I will not allow abatement to that extent,' I said. 'It is gratitude,' said he, 'for the great service you do me—by you I sell more instruments than makes me a rich man; 'who is Miss *Emcotts* maker?' is the cry, and that is enough!' And pleased I was to hear him say so," pur-

sued Miss Emcotts, "because, gratitude it was to my father, I think; and gratitude, I call my *pet virtue*."

"I should think," said her ladyship, taking advantage of the pause, "that *such* a reduction must almost make the obliged the obliger—transfer the debt of gratitude?"

Miss Emcotts observed, that Lady Naglefort looked wearied, but for her *enjoy*, Mr. Erdestone's smiles would have made amends if she had considered it a drawback, instead of an incentive; without, therefore, giving further heed to her remark, than to feel it expressed pique, she went on—"a very poor man was he, when my father first took him up, and interest I had taken in him from infancy; for the first lesson I learnt, was to serve my fellow creatures, and always should I visit the cottages, and the sick inhabitants, to nurse and comfort them, but such terror for me my father had; for

her last illness my poor mother caught in visiting one of her pensioners, and insisted he did I should not go; and that he was frightened was no great wonder."

"No wonder, indeed, my dear," cried Mrs. Serle. "All lives are not of the same value exactly, putting aside the boundaries we ought to set to charity."

"Why, whether it is quite right I do, I do not know," returned Miss Emcotts, "my father I obey, that is my law; but when I *send* gifts, I think is that enough? To my maid I said this morning, will you do me the favour to carry this little basket to Dame Wezler, and make her feel I *wish* I *could* come myself and *console* her; but as fatal is her disorder, tell her I must keep my promise not to run risks."

Lady Naglefort could not herself forbear a smile at the simplicity with which Miss Emcotts exhibited her simulation; and Mrs. Serle, though she was invariably Miss Emcotts puffer, and second, seemed

to feel she had better give her a hint to pull in a little. "There are appointed consolers, you know, my dear," said she.

"That is what I say to myself. Then fear I to be misunderstood by the lower classes too, for my friends are so wicked that they declare an *Englishwoman* I am not."

Lady Naglefort only returned a languid smile. Mr. Erdestone said he had always heard Miss Emcotts distinguished as a *Grecian*; and Marianne admitted, that she observed something of the French accent. "There I told you so!" exclaimed Mrs. Serle, seeking to gratify her friends to the utmost. "I told you you were any thing but an *Englishwoman*."

"Well, forgiven I must be," cried Miss Emcotts; "for my education is to blame not me; to France I went at five years old, and when my convent I left, every year to Paris, my father

took me to get the pronunciation as far as my poor abilities would go."

"There is then, I am sure, every *excuse*," said Lady Naglefort, "for introducing the French idiom into your mother tongue; perhaps—I don't know, for I am no great observer;—perhaps few people speak both languages perfectly, elegantly, and correctly, that you do French, I have always understood; and ungallant as John Bull is, I shall be very much surprised if he resents your complimenting our neighbours at the expence of old England."

Miss Emcotts had always held her gallicised English, in the light of an accomplishment, not a deficiency; and the straight forward interpretation of Lady Naglefort, was disgusting and offensive to her, in the highest degree; but as it was impossible to render the mis-pronunciation of her mother tongue attractive to those who did not sponta-

neously see the charm, she contented herself, that Erdestone must be struck with the contrast, between herself, and the undistinguishing John Bullism of an uneducated country gentlewoman, and smilingly answered her ladyship—"Always have I suffered by my *French spirits*, as my father used to say; for it is from them I know, and no merit, that a favourite I always am with the French, and then my English friends are angry with me. We made a tour abroad with a female relation once, and to my father I said, when we came home from parties, 'Why is Jane Emcotts always so grave, so angry it seems, with me, when much amused, I say, we have been.' 'Because,' said he, 'Jane Emcotts does not like anybody to be admired for singing or speaking French better than herself.'—But that would be envy, and I cannot believe, I *will* not, that such a passion can be indulged—it is *foolishness* to indulge it for the sufferers are

those who feel it, those who excite it are happy."

"Too often," observed Lady Naglefort, "happy *in exciting* it; thereby proving *susceptibility* to that evil passion, which, like all others, gives scope for reprobation on the score of folly as well as guilt."

"Oh! it is a first rule of mine," cried Miss Emcotts, "never to make the little I know a subject of uneasiness to others; never do I introduce French phrases; how do I know those I address myself to, have been taught the language, though general it is? And before I should be proud of knowing that language, I must forget a great many others indeed. No," continued Miss Emcotts, rising in all the self-complacency of humility. "No; the little I know, I will devote to making others happy; therefore, Mrs. Serle, do I remind you, we are to make a charitable visit to keep up Lady Whitelock's spirits."

Lady Naglefort rose too, with alacrity, and accepted an invitation from Mrs. Serle, to a musical party the ensuing week, while Miss Emcotts promised Erdestone the Welch harp.

"Ever, ever, music for Miss Emcotts, say I!" exclaimed Erdestone as the door closed after them, and for all, "who should sing, because they cannot think."

"If I was a quizzer," said Lady Naglefort, "I might find amusement in this woman, but she absolutely dispirits me; so much learning, and such a deficiency of knowledge—of self-knowledge;—such a vacant heart, with such a crammed head—such a stranger to goodness, and such a lip deep moralist. It is scarcely credible, that this girl lived most wretchedly with her father, though she cannot rest without pressing her dead parent into the duties of a puffer."

"I never hear Miss Emcotts dilate," observed Erdestone, "without calling to

mind that a certain poet has made *Vertigo* a *Divinity* ; but why experience depression from her exhibitions? Similar falseness and feebleness, and what is worse, *higher capacities, equally perverted*, disgust, and weary, and offend at every step we take in the journey of life ; but if we can turn from the hollowness of promiscuous intercourse to the endearing communications of approved integrity and purity, surely the repining condemnation of human frailty subsides into grateful enjoyment of the virtues that attach us? It is only when an unendeared existence renders us dependant on society at large for our chief enjoyment, that the unanswered affections flow back on the heart, and convert all its sympathetic impulses into apathy." The tears rushed into Marianne's eyes, and hastily quitting the room, she did not trust herself to the chance of finding Erdestone in it, till they all assembled to go out to dinner at Sir John Dawlish's. During

the evening, which was spent in music, Marianne frequently caught Erdestone in fixed, and she believed, offended observation; for she was aware of a *palpable* design to avoid him when he had turned a deaf ear to a summons from Miss Dawlish, to take his *accustomed seat* by her; and both vexed with her own *ill-conducted propriety*, and his mis-directed perseverance in attaching himself to her side, she felt a depression of spirits at once too deep for recovery, and too painful for endurance; and counting the slowly wearing hours till she retired for the night, resolved to diminish the *constant call* for exertion, by making a reason for returning home. Home! that sanctuary, to which the sickened heart flies, when labouring under the cares, none shall hope to escape, whose sensibility subjects them to the evils, inflicted by the self-love, the caprice, and the inconsideration, few, of the comparatively moral, in this world of

warfare and injustice, do themselves the violence of reining in. Marianne, from being naturally little susceptible of the glittering pleasures of the world, was the more ready to have recourse to the solitude that seemed to her deep despondence to be the *only guarantee of peace*; and while she resolved to seek it, she hoped, at the same time, to render apparent her gratitude to Lady Naglefort, for friendship and favours conferred without that alloy in the *manner* and the *motive*, that too frequently embitters all the charm and the benefit. But though her purpose seemed feasible, and judicious in perspective, when she came to put it in execution, the difficulties that had lain perdue became obvious; she feared Lady Naglefort would look with contempt on the weakness that reduced her to go to her solitary home, after having been reprieved from a visit to her grandfather to stay at Greystone; while those who had no clue

to her motives, would be struck with such incongruity ; and she felt so 'infirm of purpose' as to have recourse to petitions for some fortuitous occurrence, to bring that to pass she had not courage to effect for herself.

CHAP. IX.

“ Les serpens et les reptiles parviennent au haut des Montagnes, et des rochers tandis que le cheval le plus fougueux ne peut j’amais syguinder.”

BARON DE GRINN.

AS Marianne could not encounter Erdestone alone, without feeling conscious of an alteration in her behaviour to him, she resolved to join the breakfast table with such wilful dilatoriness, that the possibility of a *tete-a-tete* must be ob-

vinted; and accordingly Lady Naglefort saluted her, with an assurance, that she would have been punished with the loss of her breakfast, if Sir Peregrine had not, fortunately for her, been called out to try a new horse. While Lady Naglefort was speaking, Erdestone inquisitively looked at Marianne, and seeing the constraint of her reply, his own disposition to cheerfulness was checked; yet kindness was blended with the gravity with which he asked if she was recovered, though the conciseness of her affirmative might have been wholly repelling, had it not escaped notice from the eagerness with which she turned to the servant, who brought in the letters. Erdestone too, held out his hand impatiently, but he unclosed his in silence, while she, with an exclamation of pleasure and surprise, declared the long expected letter from Zeluca was at last arrived. But she had barely opened it, she had but derived conviction of Zeluca's existing kindness from the first three

words, when a loud exclamation from the servants in the hall, and a mingled out-cry of "Tell my lady!"—and "Fetch a surgeon!" produced a general alarm. Lady Naglefort darted out of the room, followed by Marianne, and Erdestone, judging that he should be more impeded by the fears and exaggerations of the servants, than benefited by their information, issued from the door that opened on the lawn, and ran round to the front of the house, to ascertain the nature and extent of the accident, with a view to take precautions for Lady Naglefort, as he had no doubt of Sir Peregrine being the object of it. Sir Peregrine was, indeed, bleeding when he arrived at the spot, but his loud and cheerful voice discarded all fear of serious hurt; and he was getting on very well with the assistance of Erdestone and a groom, when Lady Naglefort and Marianne came up to them. Sir Peregrine said the extent of the injury, was a scratch and slight sprain in his ankle, for

which he peremptorily declared hot vinegar would be a better remedy than any surgeon would prescribe; and pinching Marianne's cheek, he told her he would thank her for a bit of court plaister for his forehead, instead of a *faint*, if she could make it equally agreeable to herself. Marianne returned an ejaculation of gratitude for his safety, and ran forward, saying, she would desire Parsons to get the vinegar hot; and charged by Sir Peregrine to enquire if (as he desired) counter orders had been sent after the servant who set out for the surgeon. The invalid arrived by the time his recipe was ready, and seeing, that in truth, his hurt was unimportant, and that Lady Naglefort did not require her presence, Marianne left him in the library, and returned to the breakfast-room, where the wind had entered so violently from the door, out of which Erdestone had issued, as to have displaced a quantity of trifling articles, together with the letters that had been

thrown open on the table. She picked them both up, and resumed at the only words of her own she had seen. "My ever lov'd——" but when she pursued, "My ever lov'd friend—my only protector—dearer than all mankind!"—an appalling presentiment rendered her instantly sensible to her mistake, she turned to *Erdestone's direction*; and L. C. on the seal, confirmed the worst suspicions Lady Naglefort had given birth to; nor was it till many minutes elapsed, that the dizziness which seized her, began to yield to an indistinct fear that she should be suspected of feigning inadvertence to pry into his correspondence. But still her eyes were fixed on Erdestone's name with no clear idea; but that she held his letter sacred, notwithstanding the contempt due to his character, when he himself entered, and wholly recalled her faculties from their state of stupefaction. He approached hastily, and she suddenly rose. "I hope, Mr. Erdestone," said she,

“you will be able to put faith in the possibility of my taking up your letter from the ground, in the expectation of its being my own; I read but *one* line—that denoted my mistake, and I turned——”

• “You turned,” interrupted Erdestone, “to the signature of Louisa Cassilis?”

“No,” said Marianne, in a tone of deprecation and contrition; “believe me, my surprise did not lead me into any unwarrantable enquiry. I turned only to the superscription and *seal*,” pursued she, coupling something of disdain with her eager desire to establish her innocence; “and let me assure you, the discovery you have in your anxiety made, need not disturb you, I knew before you corresponded with a Louisa.”

Whatever might be Erdestone’s surprise at an implied rebuke, from one who could never be charged with any thing beyond the *practical reproof* the purity of her own conduct conveyed; either

from an impulse to conciliate virtuous approbation, or a desire to reinstate himself in her favour, from personal motives ; instead of signifying with *hauteur* and contempt that the opinion of an unimportant individual must be unimportant to him, he said, with alacrity, "Such is my confidence in your honour and veracity, that if you had told me you had not read that one line, I should have given implicit credit to your word."

Marianne anxiously shewed him the exact resemblance of Zeluca's hand that had misled her.

"If I had entered the room first, I should have fallen into the same mistake," said he ; "fair, polished, and regular, who can distinguish one female hand from another ? You know it appears," pursued he, after a momentary pause, "that I correspond with a Louisa," again, he paused, but Marianne gave no tokens of an answer to which she was wholly in-

adequate, and he continued,—“It should seem that you attach something reprehensible to the name of Louisa.”

All Mariànnè's firmness and self-possession returned; she saw nothing in his manner but an attempt to throw lightness and inconsequence on a licentious practice, as derogatory to religious morality, as reconcilable with the ‘gentlemanly feeling,’ on which is built the moral virtues of a man of the world; and the more disgusted at the treacherous compliment to virtue in his general show of correctness, with cold and frigid distance, she opened her lips to cut short a discussion she felt it an insult to her to introduce, just as Lady Naglefort entered, making a hurried apology for the bustle of the morning, she ordered breakfast afresh—said Sir Peregrine was following her—and asked Mariànnè the purport of her letter. Mariànnè took it up, but was saved an hesitating unsatisfactory explanation, by Lady Naglefort's

adding, "You have not finished it; pray, my dear, do—I wish too anxiously to know in what style the silence of this defying pair is put an end to to interrupt you."

Marianne, accordingly, read to herself the following:—

"My ever loved friend and companion,
"could you doubt that an injunction to
"write would be obeyed? or could you
"think I would have been thus long open-
"ing my heart to you, if it had been clear
"to me that your's had been unchanged?
"How did I know what new ties might
"be formed between you and Lady
"Naglefort, or that you would not
"take advantage of the privileged pret-
"tiness of maidenhood, and shrink from
"the *outrage* on the *delicacy* of the sex
"in an *elopement*? When *mothers* hearts
"harden, tender, fond, doating mothers,
"what natural production can be sup-
"posed capable of resisting petrification?"

“ But well as I know your mediating talents, I do not write to urge you to exert them—I write to make a request more obnoxious to the degradation of refusal—I write to ask you to come and be my support, my consolation, and my *matron*.” What, say you? “ These three wants, that indubitably end with the husband you *fastened* on, by an elopement—with the husband, the unfeeling disregard of relations threatens with the poverty, though not the cottage that comes into the *etcæteras* of true love! Yes, just so; and yet no fault necessarily lies with the husband; for it is his *duty* now to *plead* for his wife, but that don’t render it his wife’s duty to covet wearisome tedious loneliness. In fact, my dear girl, as an adviser and instructress in my inexperienced domiciliation—as the dear companion of my unparticipated *coin du feu*, I ask you to come to me. The *lonely* hours of my whole life will not tell against those I have

“ passed in the few short months of my
“ marriage ; but I am prudent, resolutely
“ prudent, for I do not *wish* to *sneak*
“ about in *society* ! Wolsey is balancing
“ back in his chair in the *old attitude*,
“ and accompanying *look*, while he desires
“ me to press you to come and see his
“ performance of Benedick. Will you then
“ prove or disprove that “ friendship is
“ but a name ? ” Of course you will first
“ visit Spire, if you intend to come and
“ witness the happiness of her who feels
“ she is interdicted transmitting remem-
“ brance to *old* friends, in signing her-
“ self the happiest of beings in her *new*
“ name of

“ ZELUCA WOLSEY.”

All Zeluca's overbearing disdain of concession was exhibited in her letter, and all her dexterity, in avoiding with *kindness* explicit communication, till she knew whether Marianne would repulse her request, while the triumph of her

asserted happiness, blending with latent disgust at the seclusion indispensable, if Wolsey lived within his income, rendered it palpable, she wished, from Marianne, some insight into the feelings of friends she could not endure to succumb to, though languishing to obtain, through their means, a release from sacrifices of gaiety and society, it was more wonderful she could make, than that with her habits she should repine at. Marianne, while she saw how much Zeluca was influenced by the hope that she would undertake propitiatory explanations, beheld, at the first glance, that the letter would not do to put into Lady Naglefort's hands ; she, therefore, repeated the substance of it to her and Sir Peregrine, and described the anxiety Zeluca betrayed, in a way calculated to conciliate instead of exciting disgust. Notwithstanding the insolent disdain of contrition or apology in Zeluca's letter, she believed her uneasy under her mother's displeasure, and that.

the invitation to herself was dictated by an earnest wish to hear of the placability of their mutual friends: she said so—and feeling that she ought to be grateful for the desired opportunity to escape from Erdestone, without bringing her motives into suspicion, she added, looking fearfully from Sir Peregrine to Lady Naglefort, “ I should, indeed, be truly happy to give her the consolation she says my company will afford, if I could be the bearer of favourable information.”

Sir Peregrine warmly protested he would listen to no fallal about shame and diffidence, and declared that he would not see, or speak, or communicate with Wolsey, till he deigned to signify, *bona fide*, a wish to that effect; and he said he should consider his sister equally culpable with his nephew, if she signified any encouragement to her son, without the sanction of his assent.

Lady Naglefort, simply said, “ I see you intend to go Miss Bessaly;” but

struck by the deep suffusion a sudden movement of surprize in Erdestone occasioned Marianne, she added, "I must allow your cousin's claim on *your* friendship is not cancelled by her misconduct, in forbearing to make you the confidante of it, she has left your propriety unimpeachable, though probably, nothing less than your advantage was in her thoughts."

"Miss Bessaly will, however, now," said Erdestone, "have to look forward to more considerate friendship; *Wolsey* will see and repair deficiencies, that the feelings of a lover will not long render him blind to, it is to be supposed."

Marianne had not turned her eyes on him during the discussion, till he spoke, and then the irony of his smile staggered her purpose; yet, when she recollected that this well-timed visit would take her from all she had been planning plausibly to escape, she thought she would not suffer herself to be deterred by such an

insinuation. To Wolsey, she felt all the gratitude due to a thousand acts of minute, but momentous kindness; that gratitude she was aware was agreeable to her from her partiality to the good and attractive qualities of the object that excited it; but that Erdestone should see any symptoms of tenderness in that partiality, was surprising to her—had often surprised—but then, for the first time occurred to her, as an *overacted* suspicion to *ascertain*, whether an eagerness to stand well with himself would not induce her to make any sacrifices to his opinion. It was impossible for her not to feel, that no manner so flattering as his, could arise from the *accidental vanity* of *ingratiating* himself; and when she recollected that a deliberate design would render him a vigilant observer, she dreaded, lest she had betrayed her own secret in detecting his. For such a man to have discovered a fond affection, he would interpret as the *growth* of *presumptuous hopes*, was more

humbling to her than any surmise that could have suggested itself; it comprehended an admission of such ideas, as she would not shock herself by dwelling on; but calling off her thoughts from the fear that he had imputed to jealous love, the shock and disgust, she was aware, personal regret rendered more forcible; she endeavoured to prove by her alacrity, that he was under a mistake, if he had imputed latent tenderness to her. She exerted herself to appear in spirits at the proposed visit; and, as an opportune message obliged Sir Peregrine to exchange questions on *her determination* into giving one himself, on the purchase of the new horse, she could join in an opinion with a readiness and ease she could not have commanded on a subject nearer the heart; and when Lady Naglefort left the room, she followed her, resolved to find an excuse for returning home, if she could not reconcile her to the visit to Zeluca. But on that her heart was set,

both because she was anxious to give any aid to her cousin that might contribute to the happiness she *must* find in domestic pleasures, till Wolsey was reconciled to his uncle ; and because she had firmness to allow, that even the *neighbourhood* of Greystone was a scene of temptation, yet she deemed Lady Naglefort's sanction indispensable, and at length succeeded in obtaining it. Lady Naglefort admitted she was still anxious enough for Wolsey's happiness—much as she considered him to have trifled with it himself—to be glad his wife had enough of what was right in her, to abide by the early selection of a friend ;—and she so meritoriously conquered her spontaneous repugnance to parting with Marianne to Zeluca, that she authorised her to say every thing to Mrs. Delvayne that should reconcile her to a step it was possible the offended mother might feel to be flying in her face, in league with her daughter ; for which purpose, she ordered the carriage early,

that Marianne might get rid of the suspense in which she held herself till she should obtain Mrs. Delvayne's acquiescence. But the point settled, Lady Naglefort proved she was aware of a motive to the visit, in addition to the ostensive one ; for she made an *instantaneous transition* to *Erdestone*, by asking Marianne, if she had caught a glimpse of the hand-writing of his letter that morning ; and if she had observed his anxiety, lest it should be put into another hand than his own. Marianne answered with a consciousness that arose from *knowing* he was the *only protector* of his correspondent ; but Lady Naglefort put down her embarrassment to another source solely, and instantly declared that she intended no hint to her ; on the contrary, from having vigilantly observed her conduct, she had imbibed the firmest respect, and most affectionate approbation, for a young, uncontrolled, unguided woman, who had the wisdom and the

virtue, to avail herself of advice, most girls would have taken as a sanction to build expectation upon, or have classed with the double dealing manœuvre, by which a matron sought to save a male friend from the fascinations of beauty without proportionate wealth. " But you, my dear," said she, " can, and do discriminate; it is natural to sympathise with a parent's views for a child ; and it is a foible of our nature, to look with a jealous eye on that exaltation in an individual, by which our own comparative superiority is done away ; yet you do me justice in believing that my advice was not insidiously given ; my regard for you is paramount over these feelings ; that regard was not ensured by flattery, or by any meanness, and is, therefore, creditable to us both ; and nothing would give me so much pleasure as to join with Erdestone in convincing Lord de Worde, that he could have nothing to overlook in you, but want of wealth ; yet I am

persuaded that Erdestone is endearing himself to you, for a gratification that previous ties must render transient." Marianne could not trust her voice to enquire the nature of those ties ; but Lady Naglefort resumed—" Men often form ties they consider binding, however bitterly repeated, and men who know the world, like Erdestone, strange as it seems, are often thus self-involved, and, in all probability, through the skill of the least desirable of those who have induced them to waver between love and ambition ; for women, such as you, proud, and delicate, and retiring, are sure to experience *desertion* when a lover *deliberates*, while those of a grosser cast, work their way undimmed by discouragement that would unnerve a noble mind : they flatter when they are offended, succumb when dignity would repulse, lay in wait for those weak moments to which the wisest are obnoxious, and secure their object by a promise or covenant they know to

be the prelude to lasting repentance. " Lady Naglefort's reasonings conveyed a soothing idea to Marianne's sense of degradation, and above all, they supposed a sanctioned engagement that exonerated Erdestone from the libertinism she had unwarily suffered to sink into her mind undoubted; but an affianced wife might exhibit caressing devotedness in the language that had struck her, and she admitted, with a sigh, that a half repentant, half appropriated *heart*, might, in the absence of its betrothed partner, find satisfaction in endearing itself to other objects. And regretting the *precipitate suspicions*, she trusted, without a clue from his own conscience, Erdestone could not have developed; her object was to convince Lady Naglefort, that she could alledge nothing in his conduct, but what all single women were so well instructed to guard against; that they could reproach only their own weakness, if superficial tokens of approbation produced disappoint-

ment at such a pre-engagement, as no rational hopes of their own could render surprising.

"It is too true, indeed, my dear," returned Lady Naglefort, "that while the habits of society bind a man to keep a *promise* into which, perhaps, he has been inveigled, his secession, on a *virtual* pledge of faith and love, is justified by a shrug or a moral maxim. What an imitable illustration is here," said she, opening the volume before her.

"But did he love? We answer day by day,
The loving feet would take th' accustomed way;
The anxious eye would rove as if in quest
Of something rare, and on the mansion rest
The same soft passion touched the gentle
tongue,

And Anna's charms in tender notes were sung.
The ear too, seemed to feel the common flame,
Soothed and delighted with the fair one's name:
And thus, as love each other part possessed,
The *heart*, no doubt, its sovereign power confessed."

"Oh, I who," pursued Lady Naglefort,

"can learn that the object of this endearing tenderness is eventually *shunned* at the instigation of *prudence* that has *her interest* in view, without condemning as the most baneful enemy of morality, that artificial conscience that gently lets down a victim with an admirable maxim, or exalted sentiment, and leaves the votary of impulse to the enjoyment of some new start of passion." Marianne was no longer able to suppress her tears; and though Lady Naglefort's look of commiseration told her a fabricated cause for them would be useless, she helped her to one, by speaking of her *regret* at leaving *Greystone* as complimentary to *all* its inhabitants; and rising, said, that as her departure was determined on, she should vote for putting it in immediate execution, in order to profit by Sir Peregrine's protection. He had intended to be in town at the end of the week, but her ladyship said, the accident of the morning would fix him at the writing-table, and bring him through business

that would accelerate his journey; and she asked if she should enquire whether he could not arrange every thing for their departure the ensuing day.

Marianne simply said "you are all goodness."

But her gratitude was as *intelligible* as she had found the benevolent sympathy of Lady Naglefort, in expediting the journey, and abridging her meetings with Erdestone; and her ladyship answered, "I will order the carriage at once, for Spire, and make arrangements with Sir Peregrine for to-morrow; for on reflection, I don't see how Mrs. Delvayne can object to your sojourn with Zeluca, when her benefit as well as her pleasure will be advanced by it; that is undoubtedly the consideration for which your society is coveted; but do you, I beseech you, my dear girl, exert your good sense and your resolution, and convert the visit into a beneficial one to yourself; and so saying, without waiting for a reply, Lady Na-

glefort closed the door. Marianne's reflections all centred in feelings raised by the foregoing conversation, and amidst love, self-reproach, gratitude and sorrow; and above all, the fear of Erdestone's detecting her secret tenderness, it was no wonder that she did not immediately recollect to be thankful for the friendly whim, that induced Zeluca to be so suddenly anxious for her company. But Zeluca's whims had a more rational, if not a more praise-worthy basis, than the volatile freaks of a vacant head and light heart. Wolsey had shewn her Erdestone's letter, in which the evil of trifling with the resentment of Sir Peregrine and Lady Naglefort was clearly set forth, seconded by a petition from Marianne, that Zeluca would write, if it was only in consideration of Mrs. Delvayne's uneasiness. But the seasonable hints, judicious as they were, were uninteresting to Zeluca; for Erdestone came abruptly to an end, with an apology for taking a limited quarter of an

hour for his epistle, that he might keep his *promise to Miss Bessaly*, whose anxiety, at not hearing from her cousin, had, in fact, urged him to write, without any distinct certainty that his letter would immediately reach, or be *welcome* to run-aways, who had so long left their friends in the dark. Wolsey derived from his friend's letter nothing but grateful conviction that he and his wife ought to conquer repugnance, and make *advances* to reconciliation; and Zeluca admitted his arguments, because she considered writing at all a preliminary to concession, and to write was her instantaneous determination. Marianne, to her surprise and dismay, was staying at Greystone, under circumstances of domesticity, that introduced a thousand apprehensions into her envious heart; she had anticipated a thorough estrangement from *all* her family in Lady Naglefort, as the inevitable consequence of her elopement with Wolsey; and in

the transition to new scenes, new habits, and new hopes, had sunk the associations of former interests so entirely, that she did not even glance at Marianne when she recurred to Greystone, as a place she should hereafter figure in, when Sir Peregrine's title should come to his nephew. Erdestone, she always considered as an unrelinquished intimate, as one whose sincere and established friendship with Wolsey would render him a constant unfailing associate in their temporary obscurity; and to suspect he was engrossed with Marianne at Greystone, while she had been anxiously awaiting his presence, his advice, and the effect of his mediation, was a shock she had mechanically believed herself as a *married woman* invulnerable to. But she soon found the simple ceremony of marriage formed no barrier to the omnipotent feelings of rivalry and competition, she had inadvertently attached to the state of delicacy; she felt that every former feeling was identi-

fied in the possible interpretation of *Erdestone's* attention to *Marianne's* wishes. *Marianne* became again of the first and last importance to her ; she recalled her mother's opinion of *Marianne's* capability to succeed, when the motive was sufficient to call forth her talents ; and she would have launched out on her heart, her breach of friendship, and her management in establishing herself at *Grey-stone*, but for the velocity of *Wolsey's* comments on his friend's hints. He quite overlooked the cordiality between *Erdestone* and *Marianne* ; and *Zeluca* saw, that heedless as he was of *Marianne's opportunity* for *captivation*, he would find nothing offensive in her turning it to account ; warned, therefore, by the generous unsuspicion, that formed so striking a contrast to her own openness to envious apprehension, she suppressed every hint of *Marianne's* dreaded sway over *Erdestone*, and represented the pleasure of such a companion in her lonely hours—

the *merit* of noticing one, to whom it was desirable to keep up the few friends she had, and the benefit of council from her who could fully instruct them in the feelings of their friends, and the properest way to conciliate and sooth them. Wolsey eagerly caught at her suggestion, and she forwarded her invitation with a determination to prevail, by piquing the friendship she believed Marianne consistent enough to pride herself on evincing, if she was not pure enough to feel. She avoided too all mention of Erdestone, which would not have been practicable to her, with a concealment of her *latent* fears, and conveyed her real wish for the council and support of Marianne, in terms of such kindness, as might naturally lead her to expect that future *opportunities* in town with Erdestone would be secured, at the slight sacrifice of a short separation from him. But, as usual, after giving herself credit for the suggestion and execution of her plan, dis-

turbance instantaneously arose to her jealous temper. Wolsey entered so promptly into her avowed wishes—expressed so much gratitude for the interest in them Marianne evinced—and stopped short in her praises, with such an evident internal recurrence to the anonymous letter that Zeluca *almost* began to wish she had left her the chance of the good fortune it might not be in her possibility to seize, instead of subjecting her to the society of one whose approbation she could not bear to see triumphant over a circumstance so disgraceful, that she dreaded to think the compliment comprised in it, had already diminished the first disgust expressed. And, notwithstanding her long experience in Marianne, her own delight in encouraging a preference, in whomsoever it existed, warned her, that no consideration of Wolsey's being married relieved her from the task of vigilantly watching that she did not covertly establish herself in a heart, Zeluca be-

lieved she spontaneously valued, above that of all men, independent of the double gratification it was not in her nature to detach from the completion of a triumph over man and wife.

CHAP. X.

*“ Silent on him her eager looks she bent,
Disdain, and fear, and shame, her speech pre-
vent.”*—HOOKE’S TASSO.

AS Marianne never had recourse to parading deference to her mother, to avert from herself the odium of any plan of domestic politics, the free agency her beloved relatives allowed her, was so apparent, that Zeluca could not be

charged with deriving from her mother's fond indulgence, more complete release from controul; but the use and misuse of the liberty they enjoyed, constituted the striking opposition of their characters. Principle and disposition rendered the peace and pleasure of those with whom she was connected a first consideration with Marianne; and when Mrs. Delvayne (without *saying* so) seemed to feel her visit to Zeluca desirable, she knew her mother and aunts would have no objection, and without waiting for their assent, which would have frustrated Lady Naglefort's plan, she sat down to inform her aunt Jane of it. And she did away the vexation she knew her aunt would feel at an apparent preference of Zeluca to more estimable friends, by stating that Erdestone seemed to have made Greystone his residence, and that he was the least desirable of all inmates to her, who would not feel the less from having to reproach

herself for giving importance to the assiduous friendliness that was assumed to ensure a passing interest to his leisure hours. Indirectly as her feelings were expressed, she knew her aunt would understand, and even pardon them, notwithstanding the weakness that had turned her warnings to so poor an account; and above all, she knew her *secret* would be kept sacred, and that she should be saved all the details with which, on such a subject, she felt it impossible to indulge Ellinor's curiosity; Marianne considered, therefore, that she had no difficulties to encounter but with herself; to command so much self-possession, as to appear *pleased* with the visit of her *own choice*, when Erdestone should express his surprise at the suddenness of it, her pride and her delicacy told her was indispensable; and all her efforts and her reasonings tended to that end. After her return from Spire, she had occupations in her room that afforded very plausible apologies for re-

maining in it; till the dinner-bell summoned the family; and when she entered the drawing-room, she found Lady Naglefort informing Erdestone of her intended departure with Sir Peregrine on the morrow. Lady Naglefort, with a view to keep Marianne's secret, if possible, enlarged on the loss she should sustain by her hasty determination; and the smiles Marianne assumed, appeared to Erdestone a high degree of pleasure, at having prevailed on Sir Peregrine and Lady Naglefort to sanction a visit, to which they were, at first, evidently repugnant, if not averse; but he tried her with no remonstrance—he simply said that she was extremely expeditious in carrying her purposes into effect, and passed across the room to join in assisting Sir Peregrine into the dinner parlour, with the friend who entered with him. Mr. Ennis was included in their domestic party, because he had still some papers to look over and arrange previous

to Sir Peregrine's journey, which related to a contested estate; but, during dinner, the conversation turned on general points of law, in which Erdestone joined with an alacrity that denoted no interfering solicitude; and Marianne could ill support her efforts at cheerfulness, when, instead of the enquiries she had prepared herself to expect, and the *interest* she had tutored herself to repay with *complaisance*, she saw him turn wholly to Mr. Ennis, either with an intention to prove her departure entirely indifferent to him, or to give her the most pointed and cutting reproof for her obvious disapprobation of his correspondence. Whether he understood that disapprobation as applying to his dereliction from morality, or as resulting from an irrepressible sentiment of jealousy, his conduct seemed insultingly to denote that she had arrogated a *right* to reprehension, from miscalculating the *import* of *superficial attentions*; and while she felt the humiliation of such

a rebuke, she almost wished he should understand (what, indeed, she was *sorry* she was *inherently* most prone to believe) that he had been detected in an immoral intercourse, *justly offensive* to all *instructed* in it, however remote from particular interest in him, and however he might build upon his rank and consequence, as absolving him from all deference to those who held moral injunctions sacred. Wholly relieved, however, from his enquiries, she remitted some of the rigid watchfulness over herself she had represented as indispensable; and taking advantage of Lady Naglefort's requiring some particular information of Mr. Ennis, fell into a deep reverie, from which she was roused by Sir Peregrine's asking "How many do you say, Miss Bessaly?"

"Only one Sir," answered Marianne; for the decanter was in Sir Peregrine's hand, and she thought his question referred to her abstemiousness, which he often remonstrated against;—every body

smiled, and Sir Peregrine, with a loud laugh, exclaimed, " I have four horses that we may get in without sleeping on the road; and Miss Bessaly calculates we shall travel one mile an hour."

" I, I——" hesitated Marianne.

" Aye, aye," pursued Sir Peregrine. " You are content to lay us upon the shelf, and set out at the lagging pace of one mile an hour, after new—no, not *newer, dearer* friends."

Marianne endeavoured not to feel the reproof, and not to see Erdestone's accompanying glance; but Lady Naglefort saw she could not rally her spirits for a cheerful reply, and relieved her. " I justify Miss Bessaly's misapprehension," said she. " Your question, with the *decanter held up to her*, as usual; was equivocal; and aware as she is, that ' that poignant liquor, which the zealots call the mother of sins, is sweeter and pleasanter to you than the kiss of a maiden.' I can but think she has sig-

nished her sense of your bias, with the most refined address." Sir Peregrine answered by retorting jests that rendered Marianne truly grateful to Lady Naglefort, for inviting the banter that drew upon herself the attention of both the other gentlemen; it enabled her to join in the discussion of their journey, when it was again brought forward, and she agreed to all Sir Peregrine's arrangements, with an alacrity unabated by Erdestone's piercing looks. A momentary pause succeeded to the final adjustment and Sir Peregrine holding out his fruit plate, said—"Miss Bessaly, will you give me some oyster sauce?"

"Oyster-sauce! Sir," repeated Marianne, with a smile, that was generally seconded by a look of wonder. "God bless my soul!" said he, "I was so full of my *debat* in town, that I was quite lost; I protest I *thought* I was eating boiled turkey!" When the heart is thoroughly depressed, even misfortune itself is not so trying to

the spirits as raillery; more especially, when offended friendship makes use of it to wrap up a charge of ingratitude. Lady Naglefort saw Marianne's eyes fill with tears, and she instantly rose. "If," said she, to Sir Peregrine, "you had asked for apple-sauce, we would have given you some credit; for we could all have referred to the *goose* without disgracing your joke by the necessity for an explanation. Come, my dear, we will leave the gentlemen to themselves. Sir Peregrine's sallies prove nothing impedes business like women." And to Marianne's relief, they retired, ushered out by Sir Peregrine's, "Get along with you old woman," and the less acceptable *politeness* that characterised Erdestone's bow, as he opened the door for them. Lady Naglefort still had an eye to Marianne's feelings; she believed her own society less tolerable than that she had rescued her from, if a constrained conversation was to be kept up; she accordingly, on entering

the drawing-room, took up a book, and in less than half-an-hour became so deep in it, that Marianne felt herself privileged to have recourse to her own room, not only for the pleasure of solitary reflection, but to complete some trifling preparations, that might otherwise, by the intervention of unforeseen mischance, retard her the next morning. In passing along the gallery, however, she felt herself impeded—Erdestone was coming out of his reading-room, and she darted aside within an open door, believing he had not caught a glimpse of her; there she listened for his footsteps, and when they ceased, she still allowed him time to descend the stair-case, which being stone, she recollected no sound would arise to apprise her of, and then issued from her shelter, but not to the attainment of her purpose!

Instead of descending the stairs, he had merely retraced the few paces to his door, at which he appeared when she reached it, exclaiming, “It was Miss

Bessy then, who escaped with such precipitation at the sight of me, into Sir Peregrine Naglefort's dressing-room." Surprise and shame, together with his reproachful air, contributed to give Marianne the feelings, as well as the appearance, of a culprit; nor did Erdestone allow the short pause that would, in all probability, have enabled her to extricate herself, if not satisfactorily, so effectually, as to justify her passing on; he instantaneously added, and with a manner and look, as impressive as his voice, "I owe it to you, to the absent, and to myself, to do away that suspicion, which (however I may lament that your opinion of me, renders you so easily susceptible of) I rejoice that the strictness of your tenets, or your natural ingenuousness, has so openly betrayed, as to authorise me to assure you, my moral character is not such as to justify the avoidance of any lady."

Marianne was transfixed. She felt the

opprobrium of the imputed criminality recoil on her own premature mistrustfulness; but fearing the discovery of the tenderness that had lost the counteraction of his misconduct, she hesitated for a reply that should convey an apology, without revealing the predominance of her satisfaction in his integrity, over *shame* at her own unfounded imputation; and she opened her lips three times, and three times recalled a too conciliating concession. Yet as he still waited, she was forced to proceed, and casting down her eyes, said, "I will not attempt to deny a *latent* doubt; I ought to blush to owe I derived from so slight a foundation as a letter; you will think——" and there she abruptly paused; for it occurred to her that he would feel himself suspected also, by Lady Naglefort; and, though her ladyship's surmise had been the groundwork of Marianne's opinion, it was so entirely relinquished, that she felt bound to take upon herself all the odium.

“ You will think,” she resumed, “ by my saying, I knew you had a correspondent, that I *derived* my *suspensions* from my *informant*; but I must take the shame upon myself; and though politeness and generosity may induce you to sink the reproofs I am too sensible of deserving, yet I know it must occur to you to retort on me, that ‘suspicion ever haunts the guilty mind.’ Yet,” added Marianne, “ contritely, I know not that I was ever *suspicious* before.” The gradually fading gravity of Erdestone’s countenance, denoted an intention to place her at ease with herself, when she should pause; but she became alarmed, lest the suspicion she had constitutionally disavowed, should be imputed to *tenderness*; and she instantly endeavoured to justify that she was, in fact, truly ashamed of. “ I trust, however, you will recollect,” she resumed, “ that it was not a letter simply—I *acknowledged* I *read* a few words, and

they *could not* strike me as the greeting of a friend or a relation. It is an insufficient excuse ; but where no apology is sufficient, what remains for me but to endeavour to prove my suspicions were not *irrational*, and to beg of you to believe that I feel the disgrace of their impertinence and injustice has recoiled on myself——”

Her manner denoted an intention to pass on, but at Erdestone's voice, she stopped. “ I see you acquit me,” said he, “ on the faith of my *unsupported word* ; and that is atonement for the alacrity to condemn. It behoves me, however, to require of you to receive ampler testimony of my scrupulosity on a point almost universally privileged, than my bare assertion in contradiction to strong appearances ;” and anticipating her intention to disclaim *doubt*, he continued—“ I admit it is a deference due to virtue *openly* to reprobate vice, and doubtless,” said he,

"you will allow, that it is indispensable to grant impeached integrity, a right to full acquittal."

"Certainly," returned Marianne, preserving just so much presence of mind, as served to repress the emotion, consequent on his apparent wish to establish himself in her good opinion, by recollecting, that his solicitude was for the fame of her who was implicated with himself.

Erdestone pursued—"The letter you saw was from a female I so much value, that far from regretting your accidental insight into our correspondence, I hope it may lead to an introduction that must redound equally to her benefit and pleasure. But before I make this a request, I ought to justify my right so to do, by convincing you of her merits; and though I must reveal circumstances I should be prone to keep secret, I am sure I may trust to your delicacy and rectitude for making no further communication, at least, for the present."

“Certainly,” said Marianne again, with the decision of unreluctant truth ; for so far from anticipating a wish to divulge what he made a point to keep secret, she felt that suspense and indecision was preferable to being made through her own precipitate suspicions, the *confidante* of his attachment ; and as a pause succeeded to her laconic reply, she availed herself of it, and added, that her departure on the morrow obliged her to some preparations, that rendered it impossible for her, at the moment, to listen to explanations, which it was obvious could not be made in a quarter of an hour.

He coloured, and was on the point of bowing an indignant assent, but amending his spontaneous impulse, he answered in a most significant tone, “I well know, that though Sir Peregrine errs in accusing you of flying from Greystone for the pleasures of a *gay metropolis*, your *cousin’s fire-side* holds out a source of interest that supercedes all others ; nor should

I have intruded my concerns on you, had they not been coupled with a *female name* I am bound to rescue from the stigma disadvantageous circumstances have thrown on it." Marianne was deeply vexed at an allusion to Wolsey, so worded, that she could only *internally* retort the charge of *suspicion* on him, which she had unwarily laid herself *open* to; and more than vexed at being the victim of a comprehensiveness of demeanour and conduct, adopted for the selfish purpose of securing a convenient depository for the passion he meant gradually to break his more exalted friends: she coldly answered, " You do me injustice, if you think any pleasures or any interests, will extinguish the regard I ought to feel for the friendship and the —the *politeness*," said she, raising her eyes to him, " I have experienced at Greystone."

He looked at her intently, as he repeated in an under tone—" *Politeness*."

She coloured, and he resumed—"A three months domestication, cordial and uninterrupted, gives promise of a deeper impression; than the gratitude inspired by a sense of politeness; at least, I feel it so—I feel that such an intimacy generates and sanctions friendship, and in that feeling, I look with interest to every thing that has near, or remote connection with Miss Bessaly's happiness; nor can I witness her abridged visit to Lady Naglefort; her unresenting acceptance of Mrs. Wolsey's *tardy* invitation; and Sir Peregrine's accelerated journey, without again regretting that *Mr. and Mrs. Wolsey's* fire-side offers a happiness that distances all other claimants.

Marianne's fluctuating colour denoted her varying feelings. Shame at her reserve—fear that she should be drawn into a defence that would render her tender sentiments apparent—and conviction that her sudden journey might

inspire ideas, fully authorising the warning, he claimed the right of a *friend* to give, all influenced her by turns. But after a short hesitation, she answered, "I am not conscious of a cold or careless interest in my valued friends here; and, if I have not shewn the gratitude I ought to feel for your lenity, in blending expressions of regard with the explanations, I have forced you into, I beseech you to impute it to the irksome feelings self-reproach raises, and not to any reprehensible alacrity to visit Zeluca; long before her marriage, I regarded Mr. Wolsey with fraternal good-will: I do so still, and am happy he joins in *her* invitation; nor can I guess why a visit to my early friend, and only youthful relation, should strike you as an unjustifiable gratification."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Erdestone, "that I should charge you with voluntarily indulging in any reprehensible gratification;" and at the softened

expression of Marianne's countenance, he pursued—"To you I have always found the natural reserve of my nature give way; on every point, near or remote, superficial or profound, I could, with delight, commit to your perspicuous understanding and faultless integrity, all the sentiments of my soul: you know that I do not think Wolsey has made a happy choice; I will add, I do not think his is a disposition to make the *best* of a *bad* choice. There is nothing factitious in the goodness of his heart and intentions; yet, where is the rectitude that can stand firm against the frailties of almost universal adoption in a life of domestic repentance, commencing at twenty-two. Example and precedent will have sway, strange as it seems, over those who feel they are to stand or fall, by their individual performances; and when we can extricate ourselves from wretchedness, by stretching the elastic chains of inclination to the extent the world sanctions, we

are apt to decide that endurance is only for those whose temperament exempts them from temptation! Will Wolsey turn from a tenacious domineering wife to sooth his outraged feelings, by the gentle mediations of a pure and sorrowing spectator, and admit *fraternal* love only? —O, no—no!”

“O, yes—yes!” exclaimed Marianne, losing all her constraint in the shock occasioned by his predictions. “But I thank you for your inauspicious prognostics; they prepare me to give timely cautions to Zeluca, if, indeed, her failings have the tendency you suppose: for the rest, Wolsey is not a profligate, nor I, even innocently a flirt; therefore, not in arrogance, but in sincerity, I venture to say Zeluca will never repent my domestication with her.”

“You rely for your *own security*,” said Erdestone, with a glance so transient, that it betrayed a fear she would suspect he meant to doubt it, “on your invulner-

able rectitude, but if your purity can stand the test of an attractive husband, and a—
an imperious wife, will Wolsey, thereby find his safety? will he fail to love her *known*, whom *unknown*, in the *essential* sense of the word, he admired? Oh that I could prevail on you to recant—still to remain at Greystone!”

“Hope and solicitude gave prevailing persuasion to his words. Marianne was momentarily lost, nor till she felt her hand in his, was her recollection brought back to the topic from which they had diverged, and to something like resentment at the gentle solicitation with which she was invited to stay to hear a disclosure of his plans of happiness. Though she felt that there was a rectitude and kindness in directing and warning her inexperience, yet, that species of consideration, when she referred the *anxiety* with which it was displayed to motives originating in Louisa, excited disapprobation rather than gratitude; she withdrew her

hand precipitately, and little inclined to risk, by a copious denial of his *unnecessary* solicitude, the discovery of the secret sentiments that were *her security*, (for delicately and respectfully as he brought *Wolsey's danger* forward, she was sensible his warning attached *equally* to both) her answer was almost abrupt;—and, certainly shewed impatience of detention—she said *that she had no thoughts of changing her plan*; and added, that Mr. Wolsey was little likely to imbibe an unencouraged preference.

“There,” said Erdestone, with wholly extinguished kindness, “there you are surely right; with regard to Wolsey, and *all* men, barring exceptions. Who will volunteer a heart which no latent relaxations from indifference, no *intermitting* frigidity does not beguile him into hopes of a *grateful*, if not an avowed acceptance of?”

Marianne's acquiescent bend seemed to

say, he had detained her, to come to a conclusion, which she had set out upon.

He could not but put down her wish to escape to a mind determined on and *engrossed by her journey*; or to a dubious reliance on the explanation he was, perhaps, more hurt at her feeling insufficient, than at the first change in her behaviour; and he would, perhaps, in his pique at a reserve, that comprehended every thing that was repelling, have recalled his volunteered confidence, had not the fame of another been implicated, "I have encroached unpardonably on your time," said he; "but I will pursue my purpose with better attention to your leisure; some extracts from letters and copies of letters, will suffice *for my defence*, and you can consult your own pleasure in devoting your attention to them; which, when you have done, I trust you will allow me to preserve that place in your esteem, that, guarded as I am, not to flatter

myself, I hope I have not falsely reckoned upon. For, Louisa, it cannot be in your *power, mentally* to retract the reprobation of that *name* till warranted; but I entreat you to believe, I can clear an innocent individual, whom it is at once my duty and my leading wish to preserve from all evils.

Marianne saw how deeply he was hurt, and all adverse feelings gave place to regret, at having, almost in a last interview, disgusted and offended him, who, of all his race she alone wished to endear: she would have said something conciliating, but could only yield a simple assent to his proposition, ere the tears rolled down her cheeks—with only one sentiment of consolation to allay the despondence with which they continued to flow—that she had quitted him with a precipitation that must have prevented his seeing them. On arriving at her own room, she ventured on a steady anticipation of the extent of Erdestone's intended

communication. That he was already married, was a supposition too justifiable not to occur, in defiance of her many anxious arguments to the contrary; and then she wondered at, and reproached her own wayward feelings, that had urged her ungraciously, almost rudely, to contend for the agony of doubt and suspense under which she laboured. She in vain attempted to complete the precautionary preparations, she judged expedient for her journey; she found that at every new effort, she diverged from action into thought—thought too painful and wearying to admit of occupation; for every instant some new error on her part rose up to complete the anguish of her feelings. She saw, herself, that her manner had been wholly changed to Erdestone, even in the very act of admitting his propriety; she was sensible that though he had associated her in his interests as a *friend*, which was the dearest hope of her heart, she had repulsed him

with a frigidity that must take away all the charm of that confidence, regard for *another* would alone now urge him to persevere in; and, above all, she was fearful, that, in the dread of opening his eyes to her feelings, she had led him to suspect she was cherishing a secret love for Wolsey; satisfying herself with moral 'phrases men daily make use of to deceive others by, and end in deceiving themselves;' and she could not think, without agony of his opinion of her, if he considered that, either wilfully or systematically, she made alledged friendship for Zeluca a blind for the enjoyment of Wolsey's company. From musing on evils she felt the more severely, as she had brought them on herself, Marianne was summoned to tea; Erdestone entered the room soon after her, but on taking one cup of coffee quitted it, without having uttered a single word; for Sir Peregrine and Mr. Ennis were busily employed in looking over papers, which Lady Nagle-

fort was several times called from her book to sign; and Marianne was so occupied in putting her work-box in order, that she had not looked up on his entrance, nor when he moved to a seat near her. But she assured herself she should, if he had remained there, and without recollecting she had given no clue to prove such an intention, she represented to herself, that his offence was so deep, he had had recourse to a *solitary* evening on finding the rest of the party so much occupied, that he would have been obliged to attach himself to her. "Ah!" thought she, "if he had always abstained from selecting me, I should not thus feel his *first* marked avoidance! But her reason presently helped her to see that candour, as well as prudence, demanded of her to correct and subdue herself, rather than have recourse to transferring on him all the blame of her own weakness; the flurry of her spirits being passed, her understanding regained its natural

perspicuity. To lament him as appropriated, and yet repine that he did not persist in selecting her as he had done, she felt to be as degrading as detrimental ; it occurred too, that he might have retired to make those transcripts he had promised, and she represented to herself that it was probably still in her power to retain a friendship she valued above all the slender promises of happiness her destiny seemed to hold out. That more than his friendship was a *presumptuous* hope she had no scruple to admit ; but while she did so, she blushed at the inconsistency of the despondence and the restlessness that proved the predominance of that hope ; she candidly owned too, that whatever was the import of his conduct, Lord de Worde's known expectations for his son ought to have been her safeguard, admitting that Erdestone had brought himself to relinquish all he had a right to expect in wife. And seeing her great and

manifest failures, she resolved not to be content with calling them over as a sort of expiation, but set at once about the task of reformation ; and by dint of reasoning, by representing that she might still look forward to the enjoyment of his society after his marriage, if she could bring herself into feelings of friendship to him, she brought her mind into such a state of serene resignation, that when he came in again, after the departure of Mr. Ennis, he saw only such tokens of regret at parting, as Lady Naglefort might well claim ; and she turned to repeat her farewell to him, with a firmness that Lady Naglefort internally appreciated it as it deserved.

But he prevented her adieu, by stating, that he should have letters for Sir Peregrine, and should see her in the morning.

Lady Naglefort reminded him that the travellers were to set out at six.

He bowed, and she cast a look at him,

that proved her indignation at his persevering levy on affections sought to be rejected.

Marianne observed her countenance, and longed to justify him, for the *promised communication* did away the insidious meaning Lady Naglefort imputed to his alacrity ; but she conceived he did not intend any exceptions in the promise he had claimed, and felt herself bound to silence. If, however, she was interdicted giving a hint to Lady Naglefort, she was sufficiently collected to take one from her ; and checking the pleasure she was unwarily extracting, from Erdestone's intention to see her in the morning, she resolved not to descend to breakfast till Sir Peregrine sent her a summons, lest she should encounter him alone, and bring upon herself a repetition of self-reproach in a *tete-a-tete*, at which she knew her presence of mind would forsake her ; and she kept her resolution, though his well known step passed her room to his own, with a

frequency, and an impatience, not compatible with casual solicitude. She recollected, however, that Louisa was the incentive to the indirect summons, and now she knew that—now she had no longer scope for repeating Lady Naglefort's lines:—

‘ And thus as *love* each other part possessed,
‘The *heart*, no *doubt*, its sovereign power confessed.’

She could only wipe away the tears of *shame*, as well as repentance, at the recollection of the *reciprocal understanding*, which had sometimes rendered such *equivocal* invitations efficient; and endeavour to retrieve her own good opinion, by summoning pride and delicacy to prove, that what had been complimentary in her deportment, was a casual sensibility [to assiduities, it was equally easy to herself, as delicate to another, to discourage, when insight into his connection made her alive to the possibility of mis-construction. And she made breakfast with such admirable re-

collection of her self-enjoined firmness, that Erdestone had no reason to think, she was quitting an object of dearer interest than she was hastening to; his gravity was extreme, and was finally communicated to Marianne, when he passed by the opportunity a few minutes absence of Sir Peregrine's gave, and said not a word of the explanatory letters, she had as fully made up her mind to receive, as if she had known he had had sufficient time to make extracts and selections. That he did not even mention the promised disclosure, was a proof to her, that her repulsive apathy to his interests had been decisive, and that henceforth, she should find him a *cold acquaintance*;—any thing was preferable to such a change, and she prayed for one half moment to be able to signify her solicitude for his *promised confidence*; yet drawing a deep sigh of despondence, she retracted the prayer, in the internal conviction, that with the opportunity would die away the abi-

lity to avail herself of it. At her sigh he turned, and beholding in her countenance, that she was not flying from Grey-stone, with utter insensibility to all its inhabitants, he looked as if he regretted his rescinded resolution, and both were wishing Sir Peregrine any where but where he was, when he suddenly exclaimed, that he had, at last, left an important memorandum, and hastened to fetch it.

Erdestone immediately approached Marianne. "I sat up last night," said he, "to render the detail you promised to receive clear, by forming it into a narrative; yet this morning I determined to withhold it, on becoming sensible how little likely it was that I, or my concerns, should find admission in a mind engrossed by coveted society and *revived affections*."

"You do me injustice," said Marianne; "my mind is not engrossed——"

Erdestone interrupted her. "I do not

continue to do you injustice. I see how wrong I was in supposing you insensible to that good-will, that must result from a long domestication, unless there is very strong inherent dissimilarity; and I see, or, I believe I see, that you will, at your leisure, find satisfaction in correcting an ill opinion you had erroneously imbibed."

He still, however, retained the packet he had taken from his pocket, as if dubious whether she, or himself should be its depositary; but he had put the question in such a light, she could not but be eager to receive it, "Believe me," said she, "I never——"

Sir Peregrine's voice stopped her. "Miss Bessaly!" exclaimed he, from the stairs, while he proved his bandaged ankle had not qualified him to surmount his hobbling pace, "Miss Bessaly, I have lost half-an-hour by my own blundering, and you have no excuse for still keeping me; if you were taking leave of a lover,

I would forgive you ; but you take yourself off from us, as if you was going to one; and——”

“I am ready, Sir,” interrupted Marianne, stepping forward with precipitation——“quite ready.”

“Come then,” cried he, taking her hand.

Erdestone recommended him to go first.

“The Devil a bit,” said he ; . “never fear, Miss Bessaly ; you shall find a hobbling protector shall set you down safe in the city of cities !”

Marianne thought she must leave the packet behind her ; but she felt that impossible, and held out her other hand.

Erdestone no longer withheld it, and pressing her hand between his, “When we next meet,” said he, in a low voice, “perhaps——” but Sir Peregrine was an effectual impediment to his proceeding ; yet he partly made amends to Marianne,

by bending so forward to conclude his conversation, when seated, that she was enabled to shelter behind him in pronouncing her final adieu.

CHAP. XI.

“ It is extremely injurious to the interests of Morality, that a bad action, as soon as it is performed by a Man to whom we are obliged, should have all manner of efforts employed about it, to make it assume the character of Goodness. This practice needs only to be carried to its full extent, to pervert entirely the moral sentiment.”

EDINBURGH REVIEW.

AS Sir Peregrine Naglefort and Marianne had few sources of solicitude in common, Marianne, at least, in the state of her spirits, would probably have

found the journey a tedious one, had she not made use of the opportunity to endeavour to prevail with her companion to allow her to be the bearer of favourable expectation to Wolsey. But, though Sir Peregrine was brought to admit a comprehension of the delicacy that might deter Wolsey from incurring the imputation of mercenary solicitude, in doing away an offence he had not gratitude and affection to abstain from giving. Marianne could not induce him to allow her to say a visit would be well received; he declared that, with or without delicacy, Wolsey should make the first advances, and said, he would not have set Marianne down at their door, if it had not been painful to his politeness to forward her in a hackney coach. As Sir Peregrine evidently considered stopping at his nephew's door a symptom of accessibility, Marianne thanked him; for her own feelings told her how unwelcome was the rejection of proffered kindness;

D. D. 2.

and, consequently, how impolitic, when the object was to conciliate; yet she feared Zeluca would feel it humiliating to receive her from Wolsey's uncle, without one word of enquiry, or recognition from him. Marianne had been so long out of the habit of guarding against Zeluca's failings, that she would have been apt to meet her as one rendered a different being by marriage, had not Erdestone's formidable prognostics been fresh in her memory; the more, however, she reflected, the more did she think his opinion harsh; she thought it scarcely possible, but that affection for a man so engaging and upright as Wolsey, must gain ascendancy over all those foibles of meanness and rivalry, that disgraced a mind strong enough to make any effort, when the necessity for self-correction was enforced by the privileged freedom of reciprocated love; and when Wolsey and Zeluca, with equal cordiality, darted forward to receive her,

she felt disposed to condemn herself for becoming systematically suspicious, in foreseeing a tenaciousness that had no existence.

Zeluca's Hebe face was dressed in smiles, as she exclaimed—"You are, Marianne, the very best girl in the world! I was sure——"

"You was sure," interrupted Wolsey, in whose animated countenance Marianne thought she saw a shade of the thoughtfulness of a married man. "You was sure," he repeated again, presenting his hand, "she was all sincerity and firm affection, and so she has proved herself." A cloud *passed* over Zeluca's brow, for the compliment produced no exultation in Marianne; on the contrary, though she believed her cousin's summons would not have been disregarded under any circumstances, she was aware her inducement to the visit was too strong to allow her to judge of the exact proportion of *disinterested friendship*; and with all

the pain that attends a generous mind in receiving undeserved praise, she assured Wolsey, that in accepting her cousin's invitation, she had done the thing most agreeable to herself, independent of affection for Zeluca; and then, anxious to avert Zeluca's scrutinising looks, she turned the subject to the point they all had at heart. After canvassing Sir Peregrine and Lady Naglefort's displeasure, Wolsey asked if Mrs. Delvayne had been really ill. Marianne said yes; but explained, that the alteration in her person was, perhaps, in a degree, owing to the effect of a bilious attack on the *complexion*.—"But why, my dear Zeluca," she added, "will you not write? I am sure a letter from you would produce a reply."

"I know that as well as you," replied Zeluca.

"And still have delayed so long," returned Marianne, in a tone of surprise.

"Zeluca made a satirical laugh that

expressed any thing but pleasure; and Marianne perceived at the same instant, in Wolsey's countenance, symptoms of unpleasant sensations, originating, she was sure, in Zeluca, by the look he cast on her, as rising, he said, "It is not always well to explain our apparent inconsistencies."

Marianne instantly made a transition to some occurrences of her journey, but Zeluca interrupted her with impetuosity. "Oh!" said she to Wolsey, "if you think I am afraid to enter into explanation, you are mistaken, my cousin, who is all *sincerity*, except that portion which is 'firm affection,' will find me quite as open as herself."

Wolsey was going to reply warmly; but, as if the thought of a moment reminded him he was a *new* married man, with a tolerable attempt at badinage, he said "No—no, ladies are not to be accused of being afraid of any thing now-a-days."

Marianne seconded his intention; by a

jest to the same purpose, and his recovered cheerfulness proved how easily, whatever it was that ruffled him, might have been got over, if Zeluca would have allowed it ; but ever as incapable of enduring blame, as if discussion would prove her guiltless of error, she resumed, after brooding in silence—" You, I can suppose Marianne, are one of those who think I am a disgrace to filial nature ; and Wolsey, if he can, will confirm your idea : but it is no such thing, I married exactly as mamma wished, only I did not make her the ostensible exhibiter at the wedding, and so, in her sweet, omnipotent, disinterested maternal love, she writes to my husband to set him so entirely against me, that we must inevitably live like cat and dog."

" Good Heavens, Zeluca !" said Marianne, directing her eyes to Wolsey at the same time, and decypher in his looks a contradiction of an assertion so monstrous !

" Pshaw, how can you talk so," said he ;

“ why can't you let a subject drop that had better be set to sleep,?”

“ That is a good joke,” exclaimed Zeluca, “ you tell Marianne I am every thing that is bad, and then you desire me to let the subject drop.”

“ I told no such thing,” retorted he.

“ I am sure I did not understand that he alluded to any thing *bad*,” said Marianne.

“ I—In fact, my dear Zeluca,” pursued she with a kindness that might have recalled Zeluca to recollection—“ in fact, he implied some slight error; and blame from those you love, you have not been used to and can ill bear; but if he is tempted to retort on your momentary impatience, he will recollect that the *importance of his good opinion* to you, ought entirely to exchange the warmth of anger, for the warmth of gratitude.”

Wolsey's countenance gradually softened, and he approached Zeluca; but before he extended his hand, the angry sneer that met his eyes, induced him to

steer his steps to the window with an air that implied he had passed by her with that intent, while she, fixing her eyes on Marianne, exclaimed—"There—there is a proof of your candour; you consider, I am to blame—you take that for granted—there is a proof of what I am to expect of your 'sincerity,' and your 'warm affection!'"

"No; pardon me," returned Marianne, "I cannot form an opinion of the source of your misunderstanding, and therefore, should be prejudiced indeed, to esteem you in fault on that head; I simply meant to excuse your repugnance to censure, just or unjust, from your desire to stand high in the opinion of the censorer."

"But you *might justly* have esteemed her in fault," said Wolsey, "if——"

"She might not," interrupted Zeluca, "*she was not justified* in deciding, without hearing, whether I am wright or wrong. I ought——"

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Wolsey, as ve-

heemently intruding on her explanation; "you know you are wrong, and want to substitute an imputation on your cousin's candour, for an investigation of your own failures."

"I do not," cried Zeluca, "for my failures, as you call them, would not be deemed such, but by you, and your *panegyrists*, and my tender mother, who throws her own imprudence on the mere girl it was her duty to guide."

"Guide," repeated Wolsey, "guide—it is my duty to guide you now, but——" he broke off, ashamed of his own vehemence, and added, in a moderate tone; "but it is the paramount duty of every rational creature to guide and correct themselves; for God's sake then, do bring your pride to the possible endurance of blame, and then your faults of omission and commission may pass off as other peoples do, without appalling the affection that is very naturally astounded at being called in to ar-

bitrate on the disputes of a barely completed honey-moon."

"Aye, indeed," said Marianne, "you ought both of you to blush at giving me such an opportunity for wearying you with hackneyed jests on matrimony. But I suggest that we '*drink* and drive care away;' Zeluca let me plead for tea, and——"

Zeluca stopped her; she rung with precipitation, and the servant entering, she said, "Miss Bessaly wishes for tea, without a moment's delay."

Wolsey uttered an indignant interjection, which rekindled all the wrath, Marianne would have suffered to pass off.

Zeluca's eyes flashed fire, "Now I understand," cried she, "the gentle endurance of blame you require. You accuse me of having stimulated my mother to swindle you out of the fortune for which you married me; and when I contest the point—I confess I do, that I am so audacious—then you take the opportunity of

the servant's entering, to teach him to sneer in my face, after having deluded me into the expectation that you was going to *exhibit the pattern demeanor* of a bridegroom."

"Swindle!" said Wolsey, disdainfully drawing out the word: "It is yourself that you degrade Zeluca, by incoherent statements—by a mixture of truth and fiction, that only shews your practice in perverting facts to exculpate your perverted conduct. Do you think that Miss Bessaly, if she was not restrained by her sense and her mildness, would not join in the contempt you justly say I *shewed*; and might have added with the merit of repressing my feelings."

Marianne sorrowfully saw that the impetuosity of Wolsey's temper threatened to deprive him of that sway, she was sure he might otherwise in a degree have obtained over Zeluca's; she was aware he must have stung her to the quick, and that the result would be, a speech

so gross to her, that Wolsey must inevitably enlist himself as her champion, which would have rendered the evil of the contest incalculable ; she waited not therefore for a pause, but said, ere Zeluca could speak—"Excuse me, Mr. Wolsey, I can believe Zeluca has exaggerated your meaning ; but if you have given her a pretence for bringing *swindling* into the argument, can you wonder she is warm? You are warm too. I will venture to say, that though Zeluca may have been too much offended to descend to clear justification, there is nothing regarding her fortune, in which she has not power to exculpate herself."

"Oh, but when a man is disappointed of a fortune in a wife," said Zeluca, in a tone that implied trepidation rather than passion, "he sees every thing she says or does in the worst light. So Mamma has not told you her own story in her own way?" She pursued to Marianne.

"She has drawn conclusions," answered

Marianne, "disadvantageous to your filial feelings from your flight; but further than that, not one sentence has escaped her; therefore, if in the effervescence of anger she has made any misstatement to Mr. Wolsey, you may rely on it, it has proceeded no further;" and Marianne, by rising, gave a hint to Zeluca to accompany her to her room, that she was most happy to seize.

But Wolsey spoke, and they felt themselves under the necessity of pausing. "I am persuaded," said he, "you think all Mrs. Delvayne's pecuniary arrangements were transacted without Zeluca's knowledge."

"I think, I can say, I am sure that such is the fact," returned Marianne. "I never heard an hint that could justify a contrary opinion; and if you have any disappointment on the score of fortune, I must say, I think you ought to transfer blame from Zeluca to her mother."

Zeluca said, "Come, my dear, I am

sure you are fatigued enough ; and our quarrels——”

“Miss Bessaly,” cried Wolsey, unconscious on what plea Zeluca was drawing her away, “I see you think me a mercenary man : Zeluca could not do worse than throw an imputation on me, so opposite, so abhorrent to my nature, that she has no right to think I will keep *her council*, and suffer it to gain credit.” Yet still, perhaps, he would have refrained from a more explicit justification, if Zeluca could have descended to humility, in her evident aversion to further discussion ; but irony was more congenial with her nature, and forcing a laugh, which she followed up with an air of self-sufficient superiority, she said, “I do think you do both Marianne and me injustice, in believing we can enter *with all this anxiety* into money concerns ; she is very sorry I hav’nt so much as you expected, I dare say ; but I am sure would rather give you her consolation on any other *grievance* ; and as for me, I really

am so sick of the subject, that I shall leave you to the undisputed championship of my helpless immaculate mother! Come, Marianne, we will go."

"No; you will stay, said Wolsey," putting his hand on the door. "It is not by jeering at me, for a defence of your mother, which I never undertook, that you shall qualify yourself to stigmatize me, and elude the shame which is your due——"

"Oh," interrupted Zeluca, with an assumed nonchalance, that was meant to discredit the subterfuge she was as little inclined to admit, as if she had been guiltless of it, "I am perfectly willing to remain and be overwhelmed with disgrace if it is your pleasure. If you like to make my friend your *prisoner* the first half-hour she enters your house, that is your affair; it is a little inconsistent with your former obsequious admiration," pursued she, maliciously; determined at once to repay

Wolsey, by wounding his self-love where it was most vulnerable, and to divert the quarrel into a new channel; "it is quite out of character with your heroic verses on her; those verses that immortalize both *you* and *her*!" said she, with a look of the most insulting irony. "By the bye, Marianne, I must have a copy; it is but fair that a wife should have the power of displaying her husband's *talents*."

"What!—are they not Medlicott's verses?" asked Marianne, referring directly to them, as the probable source of a recrimination she could not find a sufficient cause for.

"Medlicott's! Lord, no my dear! You don't pretend you have forgot Wolsey's effusion the very first evening he was so happy to have his talents drawn out by you.

"Vice is not Virtue, well I wis
One's good, the other's much amiss."

those were the two first lines, I think—

certainly the very ditto of them, if not a perfect parody ! But the misfortune is, I cannot go on. I only know that a compliment to you was at the tail of the impromptu."

Wolsey was the colour of crimson ; but *shame*, at owning he put enough importance upon the repeated lines to *feel* her satire, was stronger than anger, and he preserved an embarrassed silence, while she proceeded. "Marianne, you don't tell me I shall have a copy ; is it their excellence, or what is it that so endears them?"

"You !" cried Wolsey, no longer master of his indignation, "I will venture to say, she is so disgusted at your producing, at the distance of two years, an unpremeditated translation of a riddle, hit off amidst the chat of a work-table, that she would not for worlds expose me, by giving them to you. Oh !" pursued he, in a tone that expressed a great deal, "how much was you one half-hour that evening, like what you are now."

Zeluca felt his *meaning* with sensations the effectation of her laugh could not conceal ; but, as if she shrunk from the pain of dwelling on it, she retorted in a hurried manner. " She has it not in her power to give them, though I offered twenty worlds ; I should have been the idiot if I had not at the time secured lines, so——" She stopped at the imploring look of Marianne, as if intuitively struck with the turpitude and folly of bringing the man into disrepute with himself, whom she was bound to endear by proofs of her approbation ; and Marianne, anxious to do away his irksome sensations and all the detriment to Zeluca comprised in them, said, that the lines were exactly adapted to the occasion, and had relieved her from an embarrassment so humiliating, that she conceived they must have been good, though such had been the confusion of her thoughts at the time, she had always attempted in vain, to recall a single couplet.

“That is fortunate for me,” said Wolsey, with a look of satisfaction; “and Zeluca cannot give them you. Let her say what she will; her behaviour at the time convinced me they could only afford pleasure to an ill-natured sneerer, and I secured them.”

“Zeluca’s power of affecting *sang froid* was not equal to the occasion; foiled in her purpose of giving pain, she turned exultation into accusation, and answered. “So you suppose I wish to publish my husband’s amatory verses on young ladies—no; that will soon be done for me I see; I shall be told, I ought to countenance the flirtation I used to practice; but it is not the first time,” concluded she, looking at Marianne, “that a husband has been flattered at a wife’s expence.” Marianne well knew that a sense of injury was exhibited by Zeluca, with far bitterer accompaniments, and would have been content that her ill humour should evaporate in charges, with which

she had been accustomed to intimidate those around her into submission, or to bring them into soothing her ; but Wolsey was exasperated ; and then he could neither concede nor pacify, though he sometimes felt himself *endeavouring* to avert an *impending* altercation, with an internal dread, that he should eventually enroll himself on the list of the hen-pecked. He turned to Marianne, prepared vehemently to defend her from the imputed accusation ; but seeing that she put it down to Zeluca's *temper*, not her *conviction*, he recurred to the original cause of dissention. " You are," said he, scornfully to Zeluca, " a practiced belligerent ; you manœuvre your charges against others, with a view to ward off your own exposure ; but I will be trifled with no longer. Miss Bessaly," he continued, in a firm and temperate tone, " I will explain the grounds of the *fracas* that introduces our matrimonial habits so respectably to you. I wrote immediately after our

marriage (and he heaved a sigh)—I wrote, with Zeluca's sanction and assent, to Mrs. Delvayne; and by her wish, I must say her *exhortation*, stated the smallness of our present income, covering what appeared to me a most indelicate hint, as delicately as I could. Mrs. Delvayne's answer arrived without delay, and it was a most distressing one to me; it deterred me then, and it deters me now, from writing to my uncle; for I must convict the woman I hoped others would respect as well as myself of what she, not very hyperbolically, terms a swindle; or submit to incur the reproach of having wilfully deceived a man, who has been more than a father to me, on a point on which I believed and expressed myself informed: there is the letter," pursued he, tossing it into Marianne's lap. Zeluca started up to seize it, but he was too quick for her, and she burst into tears. But before she could speak, Marianne disclaimed the reproaches she was going to pour forth; she besought her with

the most soothing sympathy to discard her uneasiness—assured her she had no prying curiosity—and declared, that under the indignation that triumphed over prudence and justice, in them both, she felt bound to let every thing they had mutually uttered pass into oblivion. “And I beseech you, Mr. Wolsey,” she concluded, not to give me the pain of being the depositary of concerns that should be sacred to yourselves; and must be unwelcome to me while the possibility exists of charging me *justly*, or *unjustly*, with interference. Only let me say that if any thing is equivocal in Mrs. Delvayne’s letter, it should tell against her, not Zeluca, from the circumstance of her mystery; for she has never hinted at having heard from you, notwithstanding all the surprise at your silence, and the efforts that have been made to set her at ease on that head.”

“There is nothing equivocal in her letter,” cried Wolsey, “all that is doubt-

ful you have explained—that it is left to me to communicate to *my family*, what shame on her own account, I suppose, prevented her revealing; but that makes no difference with regard to Zeluca, who owns her cause a bad one, in declining your verdict, though at every *fracas* we have had, and we have had *many*, you have been her constant resource—you that referee, for whom a list of grievances is prepared, and this, *as she said*, the foremost. Tears,” he concluded, “tears are beginning to lose their effect with me;” yet while *he said* so, he forebore to press the letter on Marianne.

But Zeluca could not endure the contempt that mingled with their indubitable influence. “You are mistaken!” cried she, “if you think my tears are meant to soften you; I despise the thought of succumbing to those even I look up to.”

“You do!” said he, colouring. “It shall not, however, be for the weakness

of lying under a stigma myself, to conceal your disgraceful acts, that you shall henceforth look *down on me*. Miss Bes-saly," he continued, with quivering lips, "this letter of Mrs. Delvayne's, declares that she has sunk £8,000 of her property, in conformity with *Zeluca's unappeasible desire*, to vie in some degree with her neighbourhood: she then says, she could so have arranged matters with Sir Peregrine, that by prevailing with him to take a less sum at present, *Zeluca's fortune*, through her arrangements, should have been made up in the end what she had given it out to be; and she asks me, how *Zeluca*, basely, and unfeelingly disappointing all her plans, and outraging all her feelings by her premature marriage, can venture to call upon her to *distress* herself, to enrich the poverty sought in defiance of wishes, she ought, in common gratitude, to have conformed to. "And now," asked Wolsey, "what do you say to *Zeluca's* urging me to a clandestine

union, lest Lady Naglefort's aversion to *her* should prevail on me to abandon her? How would you have felt at detecting this motive to the dread of intervention? I declare, before God, if she had communicated to me the *reason* of her dreading to bring Lady Naglefort to compliance, I should have beheld her conduct in no other light than open-hearted imprudence. I should have had no doubts whether her solicitude was to secure *me* or a *good match*—I would have abided by my plighted faith to her, and scorned to have felt, or urged a few thousands less, as cause for hesitation; nor do I believe my uncle or Lady Naglefort would have made such a plea; though now they will see the defalcation as the cause of double-dealing and treachery, in which they will, perhaps, include me. I can neither," he continued, pacing the room with the quick step of perturbation, "make up my mind

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to reveal, or to conceal what she has thus rendered momentous."

Zeluca's complexion varied from red to white, and from white to red. And Marianne, great as was her astonishment, saw that Wolsey had stated nothing but indubitable facts. Her surprise that Mrs. Delvayne's financial judgment and discretion should have been prevailed upon to gratify Zeluca's profusion, was lost in her deeper participation in Wolsey's feelings, at a deception and treachery, his upright mind must see equally base to her mother and himself; she could not wonder at his shock, but as soon as she recovered her own, she hastened to dispel the irksome silence, and to offer him consolation, by saying, that when Mr. Erdestone came to town, his mediation and advice would enable him to get rid of his vexation. To Erdestone Marianne *mentally* flew at every doubt, and every dilemma, and often, and often, during

the painful discourse, had she sighed for an interference that always seemed to her auspicious and available ; but no sooner had she uttered his name, than she dreaded, lest she should have excited wonder. Wolsey, however, seemed to coincide in her ideas, by his returning composure, and Zeluca exclaimed, without shewing she eyed her—" Yes! *he* would soon set all this formidable business to rest ; I am only vexed I did not at first conciliate him ; I knew how *angry* he must be *with me* ;" and she added a few words in a tone as indistinct as it was significant ; but having found her voice, she went on to a sort of desultory justification, consisting in a comparison between herself and her mother. " Wolsey talks of my doubtful attachment," said she ; " what does he think of my mother's to me ? What has she done for the daughter she has made such a parade about loving ? She wanted to cajole Sir Peregrine, and make the boasted expence of my education serve

for a portion, while she figured away at my wedding, and because I——” She broke off, and bursting into tears, added in an under tone,—“she is a wretch!!

Marianne at once respected, and pitied Wolsey, yet anger and contempt at her cousin's deceit subsided, when she reflected how many admirable qualities had in her been cruelly perverted; how capable she still was of repairing habitual errors; and what, perhaps, is the strongest, though the least explicable of all ties—how vigilantly she had, from their earliest acquaintance, aimed at procuring her happiness, while endeavouring to correct her failings; and her heart, entirely softened at beholding tears she believed to flow in anguish, at Wolsey's diminished affection, though she was too proud to say so. Marianne deemed Wolsey so generously placable, that he might be brought to forgive in another, what he never could have been guilty of himself; and she could not see the op-

portunity Zeluca's emotion afforded to pass off; she assured him, that from the very first day of their meeting, he had been selected by Zeluca, when she was *too* young to be *swayed* by pecuniary considerations, or what was yet more decisive, when *such considerations* would have led her *another way*; she said that the evil of profusion would be too clearly seen by a mind so discerning as her's, not to render her, henceforth, a skilful, trust-worthy œconomist; and she asked him, admitting her delinquency, why he should doubt that *affection* was the motive to it, when there were others with whom she might have made as advantageous a match, if interest had been her object.

Wolsey remained silent, not because she was altogether unanswerable, but for a cause Zeluca would probably have discovered, had not her face been hid on the arm of the sofa. The anonymous letter that he had lost sight of, in the new views his married life opened to him suddenly,

occurred with an internal assertion, that proof alone should have made him believe. Marianne's candour and integrity could have descended to such an action; and he only admitted the possibility, on grounds calculated to carry Zeluca's punishment in her fault: he assured himself that *nothing* but *love* could so have misled her. Her unembarrassed deportment, however, at meeting, and afterwards, convinced him that *love* no longer existed; and if he felt a species of regret at the conviction, he soothed his self-love by reflecting that a three months absence; the hopelessness of unanswered affection; and the discovery that it was not Miss Emcotts whom she felt herself entitled to supplant, were insurmountable drawbacks to constancy; his gratitude was, therefore, so consonant to his feelings, that he laid hold of her generous adherence to her cousin, under the trying circumstance of prosperous rivalry, as a merit constituting full atonement for

the lapse so flattering to himself, that he would never have been at a loss for reasons to declare that "the single error could not counterbalance her thousand thousand proofs of goodness." He felt no difficulty in retaining only the pleasurable sensations that arose out of an act he had *promised* to consign to *oblivion*; and by representing that he ought so to do; by justifying her he favoured in the shameful offence he unwarily imputed to her; he proved that our best, as well as our worst impulses, require strict regulation to guard the sense of rectitude from the sophistry of the feelings. Wolsey's reasonings passed in his mind with the velocity of eager thought; nevertheless, his silence could not but be striking. Zeluca wept on, with murmured wishes that she had never married; but Marianne, seeing that perfect complacency had supplanted all the angry emotions his countenance before denoted,

augured nothing but good to her cousin from his long reverie ; and was wishing it was in possibility for her to withdraw, when the servant entered, to say, a gentleman, who had been at Wolsey's chambers, was anxious to speak with him, on particular business, and he quitted the room directly.

“ Oh ! Zeluca,” cried Marianne, “ pause seriously, ere you give into a habit of contention that must alienate love and esteem ! Your understanding is unquestionable ; and——”

“ And tells me,” interrupted Zeluca, “ that your caution comes too late—that the habit is formed—that my life promises to be an existence of strife—that——” and bursting into a fresh agony of tears, she covered her face.

“ What an assertion !” said Marianne, encouraged by the strength of her emotion to build on her reformation. “ Your fate is in your own hands, if you will

but devote the power nature and education has given you, to retaining the heart you have won."

"No, no," cried Zeluca; but her hope of being contradicted was evident. "No, not unless you can teach me how to remove the disgust, and anger, and suspicion that must be fixed after *one* such bitter quarrel as we have had without number."

Marianne was indeed struck; for, in dissensions where the heart and principles are implicated, she was aware of the difficulty of regaining confidence; but it was *Wolsey's* generous, forgiving disposition that was to be worked on, and she reasoned Zeluca into silently admitting, that her love and kindness would dispel that fear of her affection she ought to feel gratified it was so painful to him to entertain; but she added that Zeluca ought to be consistently and invariably active in undermining suspicions, formed as her sense must tell on strong grounds.

Zeluca was, in a degree, appeased by her encouragement; but at the implied censure, she made a transition to her mother; she recapitulated the substance of the letter, in which she said Mrs. Delvayne had not merely stated facts, but commented with the avarice of a stock-jobber on them; and she muttered "Hateful, selfish dissembler!" with a malignity that appalled Marianne, who directly asked, what she expected her mother was to live upon, if, in addition to the sum that she knew to be sunk, any material fortune to her was to be added? Zeluca coloured in the conscious selfishness of her expectations; for insults and slights of the grossest kind, appeared to her but as trifles to be overlooked with the same facility all her failures had been varnished over. She did not, however, confess the extent of her expectations; she answered, that where there was so much parade of affection, there ought to be some sacrifices.

"Your mother has surely made you many sacrifices," said Marianne, "and without parade—indeed she has—indeed I have witnessed exertions and solicitude in her, that have made me absolve her from the indolent self-love, that comprises self-indulgence in the over indulgence of so many parents."

"And what do you think," cried Zeluca, "of her carrying resentment to me? admitting I am every thing that is vile, to the extent of setting Wolsey against me. What mother do you think?" cried she, as if triumphant at a fair opening for abjuring all filial love, "what mother would have revealed my duplicity, as Wolsey calls it, on such an occasion? To refuse would have been enough, if she had been disappointed—disappointed of cajoling Sir Peregrine, in which, if she had failed, I should have lost Wolsey."

"If you had but told him," said Ma-

rienne, with a regret she was aware was ill-timed when it had escaped her.

Zeluca looked angrily. "That was'nt, however, what mamma lamented," said she; "you would have made as great a lapse in filial duty as I, if that is what you deem my fault; it was in not allowing my ostentatious mother to be lady paramount at a wedding."

Marianne was on the point of stating, that it was the implied disjunction of her own and her mother's enjoyments that gave the shock to Mrs. Delvayne's feelings; and the bringing her into difficulties, with regard to money matters, that she should, in *justice* and *gratitude*, have aided her to overcome; but she recollected that, whatever was the source of Mrs. Delvayne's resentment, she had retaliated an evil on the child, whose offensive conduct to herself was but of a piece with the established system of misconduct to others, that was chargeable on

her; and Marianne viewed, with disapprobation, the unserviceable punishment, inflicted at the impulse of her own wounded self-love, with a severity Zeluca had never experienced from any *other* individual.

Zeluca saw that Marianne had no sufficient justification of her mother, and she thereby felt as if all her own failures were transferred to her; and accordingly, enlarged on the weight that would rest on Mrs. Delvayne's conscience, if she and Wolsey were miserable together; but Marianne eagerly warned her, that whatever might be Mrs. Delvayne's account with her own conscience, it could not relieve her's from full responsibility for Wolsey's happiness; for she strongly insisted on the power she possessed, of retrieving with a disposition so generous, and temper so forgiving, the ground she had lost by the collusion he would determine to be *love* or *venality*, according as she made his happiness her study. *Zerr*

luca seemed touched at once by Marianne's solicitude, and the imputed power of constituting Wolsey's felicity; and her spirits returned, invigorated by the hope of a species of dominion over him, Marianne had not alluded to; and thought it right to hint it was both dangerous and unbecoming for a wife to aim at; but she had implanted the belief of his placability, and Zeluca, shaking her head with the incredulity of exultation, resolved to shew she could make it a *lover's quarrel*. Accordingly, when Wolsey entered, she held out her hand to him, with a smile, in which, tenderness was so blended with contrition, that all his gravity vanished, and with it the resentment that might have been *for ever* banished from his heart; for, where he professed forgiveness, no remaining seeds of enmity lurked in his mind, to render reconciliation merely a suspension of hostilities. His whisper conveyed all that love and approbation could return to her spontaneous concession, and throw-

ing the ill-omened letter of Mrs. Delwayne's into the fire—"There!" cried he, "so perish with the cause of it, all recollection of our folly!" And the evening vanished in harmony, mental and instrumental. Zeluca played his favourite airs, and talked over the pleasures they must relinquish, and those they might still have recourse to in their present state of poverty, with all the precaution of prudence, and without the reprehension of any offender, or sarcasms at any deprivation. Nor till after they had exchanged the evening farewell, did any unpleasant sensation appear to intrude into her mind; then, unfortunately, Wokey's approbation of Marianna called to mind her praise of him; and he only averted the gathering gloom that threatened, by an eulogy on the reciprocity of Zeluca's regard for her. Zeluca perfectly well knew he alluded to her anxiety to drop the anonymous letter, for her cousin's sake; and she

had such a reliance on his promise, that she had no fear of *detection* from his alluding to it ; but apprehensions almost as offensive kept her waking, and haunted her in dreams when she did sleep. She thought better of Marianne than of any female in existence ; but not *well enough* to *rely on her*. Through the *savoir faire*, in which she was unrivalled, she could promise herself a triumph over Marianne in the competition for any heart *but her husband's* (with whom, as the *turpitude* of the *imputed transgression* gradually died away, in the constant contemplation of the most endearing qualities, it might eventually be converted into an *irresistible* appeal to his affection ;) and would Marianne, if she refrained to *seek, reject a proffered opportunity* for revenging other defeats ? Zeluca said to herself, “ No ; ” and though Marianne was the only female in whom she could find a solace for her lonely hours, to get rid of her again was a first impulse. But Zeluca

was a discriminating observer—and Marianne had named Erdestone on a most natural occasion, with a consciousness, that assured her *there was* an understanding between them, which she could only promise herself should come to *nothing* under *her eye*; whatever, therefore, was the change of plans in preventing her growing favour with Wolsey, it was indisputable, that she must adopt none that would send her into retirement with Erdestone.

Marianne, on entering her own room, found her first reflections also resting on Zeluca; without seeing all the potency of the principle of self-gratification, which was the only principle implanted in Zeluca, she saw enough to make her fear that marriage had removed a restraint, instead of imposing a new check; and had she reasoned long enough upon her conduct, she would probably have become sensible, that the degree of self-controul that had been, in a degree, sub-

mitted to secure a husband, would never again be exerted, except when her love of admiration rendered him the spectator, instead of the object of amiable sacrifices and inviting condescensions; but Erdestone was a source of interest with Marianne, that superseded all others; and as her friends had retired early, in compliment to her fatigue, she drew his packet from her pocket, in the hope, that large as it was, she should get through it in seasonable time.



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